THE GUIDE TO COMICS • 51

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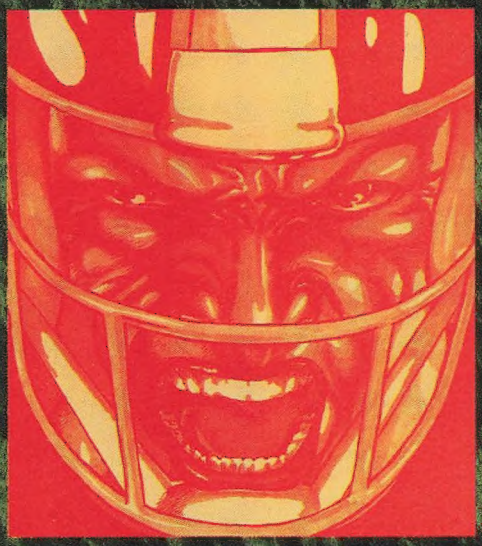

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NOVEMBER 1995

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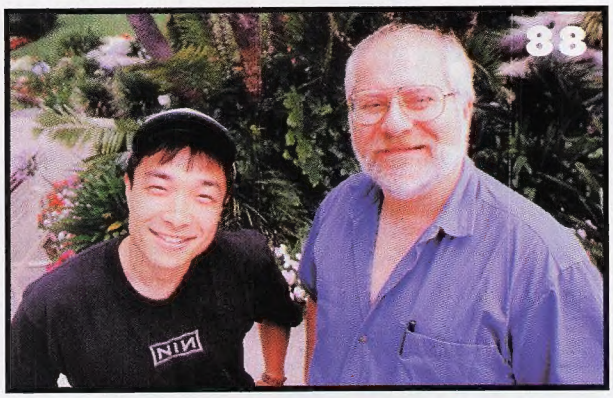

John T. Barr

Robert Beck

EEW!

THERE'S A BUG ON THE WALL

WIN an awesome wall-crawlin' Spidey figure! Slap this porcelain baby on your wall and watch the chicks march right in! Swing on by page 54, now!

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toyotas

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from the top

¡Viva la San Diego!

I just got back from the San Diego Comic-Con. I spent the week there with a lot of other *Wizard* staffers and I came back with the best tan. It was good to see everyone in the business. We threw a little pool (as in the game) party and some very cool people showed up, including Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld and Marc Silvestri. They were all afraid to challenge me to a game of pool, though.

It was great seeing so many fans at the show and I enjoyed playing all of you who challenged me to a game of *Magic: The Gathering*. I don't seem to remember losing any games, but I am changing my deck—anti-white cards won't work anymore...

We gave away tons of prizes and lots of people embarrassed themselves at The Wheel of Doom. Also, there was a lot of attention paid at the San Diego show to the small, independent publishers, which was great to see. I even had an opportunity to buy a cool Beanworld statue that I had creator Larry Marder sign. I hope all of you get to make it to a comic convention next year so that I can meet you.

This month, Sam Kieth did an awesome job on the *Maxx* mini-comic. *The Maxx* cartoon is doing very well on MTV and will probably be a big movie one day. Sam says he's going to put me in it—I get to be a star, just like Stan Lee in the new movie *Mallrats*, which was incredibly funny. In my opinion, it's the best movie about comics to ever come out. Anyway, I tend to think you'll like this issue. Why? Well, we bring you interviews with Adam and Andy Kubert, Chris Claremont, David Lapham and the participants of the X-Men cartoon. There's also behind-the-scene pieces like watching an Avengelyne poster photo shoot and sitting in on an Avengers plot session.

Next month is our second annual Halloween-themed issue. Look for The Pitt and/or X-Files cover. Plus, we've got the results of our annual Halloween Costume Contest (heck, you just might see last year's controversial Vampi girl, Paula, pop up in another costume; you never know...). We also have a Spider-Man mini-comic by Dan Jurgens and you can catch an early glimpse of Alex Ross' art from DC's upcoming *Kingdom Come*.

Make sure you check out *Wizard*'s Annual Price Guide coming out in November; we have lots of photos and prices you won't want to miss.

See ya soon!

Gareb S. Shamus

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Cover Art Courtesy of Fleer Entertainment. Penciled by Andy Kubert for Fleer Ultra X-Men '96 all-chromium set.

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MAGIC WORDS

A Can of Worms Tastes Yummy-Nummy

Whoa, Nellie! Bill Worley's letter in *Wizard* #47 looked innocent enough. He just wrote in to say that he was a comic fan/father who enjoyed reading comics with his son and that he thought the Comics Code stamp was a good idea. It helped him find comics that both he and his son could read together. Like I said, it looked innocent enough.

Then the flood started. Mention the Code in a comics 'zine, and you're sure to get at least a little feedback. Well, we got tons. Hundreds of letters have already arrived commenting on Bill's letter, and they're still pouring in. Most letter writers were anti-Code, but many sympathized with Worley's concerns. A few agreed with him outright. We'll lead off this month with one letter each representing either side of the argument.

In other news, we got our first letter from a pissed-off Frenchman who's angry about all the times we rip on the French. It's about damn time you took notice, Froggie.

Code Bad...

Dear Wizard,

I can't say I was shocked to read Bill Worley's letter in *Wizard* #47. At this point I'm even beyond appalled to read letters that condone censorship. And that's what this letter did.

It seems to be a common trend in the Age of Gump to allow other people to run one's life. Bill Worley, a man who claims to have an active interest in his son's life, is more than willing to let the Comics Code do his parental job for him. He says he appreciates "knowing that a book with the Comics Code emblem will not offend" his attempts to provide his kids with a safe environment. And why should anyone be allowed to offend that attempt?

Hell, why not throw anyone who litters in prison? I'm sure there are people offended by that. And while you're at it, I hate it when people cuss in public. Do me a favor and cut their vocal chords out. Better yet, cut everyone's vocal chords out, thereby keeping me from ever having to worry about being offended. Don't even get me started on the guy I saw scratching his butt in the mall the other day.

Extremist? No. Censorship is a moral issue. To punish all artists for another's inabilities or faults is morally wrong. It is a violation of the rights of all men. To force certain guidelines upon all men because one man is offended is, quite frankly, the reaction of a despot.

I refuse to give in to censorship, and I also declare that any man who gives in betrays not only comics, but novels, films and ultimately, life.

Other people may be so inadequate that they need something as ridiculous as the Comics Code to make their choices, but I don't. I refuse to be force-fed the slop that makes the masses happy. I want my art pure and unadulterated, integrity intact.

Now, I'm not a fan of the Image books at all, least of all Liefeld's stuff, but that doesn't give me the right to tell him what to write or draw. And it doesn't give anyone else that right either.

Maybe the Comics Code should change its symbol to a target. That's all it really is.

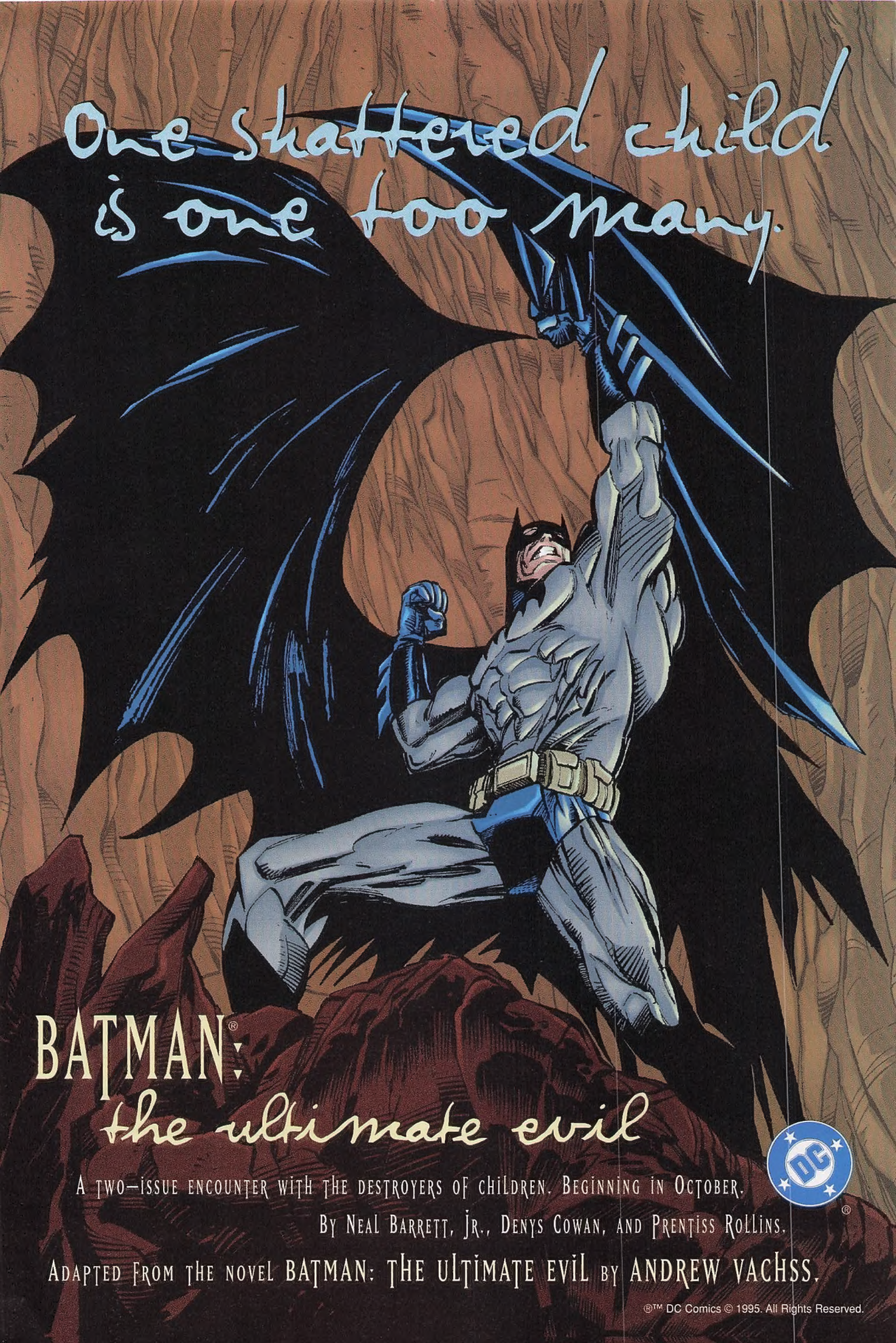
Scott Griffin
Aurora, CO

I consider myself a civil libertarian at heart and I honestly feel that offending the sensibilities of the mainstream from time to time is a good thing. That's part of the role of art—to give society something new and different to look at that will hopefully make us all think in a new way and help us progress. On those grounds, I'm a big fan of comics (or damn near any media) that shake things up. A little offense is a good thing.

But do people really use the Code to make their choices for them? Does the Code truly censor? Check out our next letter for another opinion.

Oh, speaking of vocal cords—you may want to be careful when passing through Raritan, N.J. That city recently enacted a verbal obscenity statute. If you publicly say a naughty word in Raritan, you could be looking at a night in the clink. Things are getting pretty scary out there.

THESE LETTERS ARE GUARANTEED HAND-PICKED FOR FRESHNESS


One shattered child is one too many.
BATMAN:
the ultimate evil
A TWO-ISSUE ENCOUNTER WITH THE DESTROYERS OF CHILDREN. BEGINNING IN OCTOBER.
BY NEAL BARRETT, JR., DENYS COWAN, AND PRENTISS ROLLINS.
ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL BATMAN: THE ULTIMATE EVIL BY ANDREW VACHSS.
DC
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Code Good... (But Fire Still Bad...)

Dear Wizard,

You asked for responses to Bill Worley's letter on the Comics Code, so here goes:

I certainly agree with Worley that it's getting more difficult to find really good comics that are suitable for young children. It's too bad that the entire industry seems to be neglecting the very age bracket that has kept it going all these years. Worley says he trusts the Comics Code to point out suitable entertainment for his son, and makes a good argument in support of its continuation. Personally, I see nothing wrong with the Code seal. Parents have a right to know what their young children are reading. What parent has the time to peruse every single picture and word in every single comic their child reads? The Code is useful because it allows the parent to see, at a glance, whether or not a particular comic is suitable for their children to read. With so many of today's mainstream comics (especially Image titles) all but overflowing with extreme violence, sexual innuendoes and even nudity, parents need something to separate the kid-friendly stuff from the more adult material.

As you pointed out in your reply to Worley's letter, the entire comics community seems to turn its collective head and spit whenever the dreaded Code is mentioned, and the Code is almost constantly associated with censorship. Well, I can't understand how simply labeling a comic as being suitable for children would constitute censorship. It's a *label*, folks. All the seal does is say, more or less, "This comic book does not contain graphic sex scenes, dozens of curse words, and enough blood-soaked bodies to fill the Grand Canyon." That's it. Likewise, a so called "mature readers" label usually denotes the opposite. The Code doesn't stop anyone from printing "mature" comics, and it doesn't force the entire industry to abide by a strict set of regulations. If a book meets the Code criteria, it gets the seal. If it doesn't, the book just gets printed without the seal.

Lastly, you seemed surprised that Mr. Worley could hold the views he does without being "one of those fire-and-brimstone witch-hunting censors." Well, believe it or not there actually exist some very sane and reasonable people who are very concerned about adult material prevalent in mainstream comics today

THE BUNNY AWARD

be afraid

Paul Schiraldi

Jim takes one of his favorite letters of the month and spotlights it here. There's no logic attached to this nor is there a prize.

Jeopardy–Wizard Style

Dear Wizard,

You get tons of people asking you questions about different things in this letters column. I have a better idea. I'm going to give you answers, and you come up with questions that fit my answers. Sound cool? Here goes.

1) 763.5346.
2) Fone Bone would win that one.
3) Shamballa.
4) Superman could beat that cheesy '70s Marvel character any day of the week.
5) Because he's been taking dance lessons from Patrick Stewart's nephew.
6) To get to the other side.
7) *Spawn/Batman* was better.
8) Mirrors. Lots of mirrors.
9) Bunnies.
10) I'd have to hand that one to Silver Samurai. Barely.

I'm done now. May you forever walk the road to happiness in peace and harmony.

Bobert3@aol.com

Sounds like fun. Here we go:

1) Pick a number, any number, between one and 1,000.

2) Who would win in a fight between Fone Bone and romance novel-cover heartthrob pretty-boy Fabio? Let's say Fone Bone was armed with the world's sharpest meat cleaver and Fabio was dead-drunk, blindfolded, with a concussion and two broken ankles and he just ingested 80 milligrams of horse laxative.

3) Where did The Shadow learn all his cool tricks like the ability to cloud men's minds? And while we're at it, what's the name of that bar you used to go to where they serve mai tais in those huge glasses bigger than a goldfish bowl?

4) Brother Voodoo versus Superman. Who wins?

5) Why hasn't Jim Lee drawn an issue of WildC.A.T.s in such a long time?

6) Why did the chicken cross the road?

7) What was better?* Spawn/Batman *or that time when you were a kid and you went flying over the handlebars of your bike and tore open your body to the tune of 43 stitches?

8) OK, this Tommy Lee character. First he marries Heather Locklear. Then he gets hitched to Pamela Anderson. But he's about the butt-ugliest man on the face of the planet and his only claim to fame is that he plays with Mötley Crüe, perhaps the worst pseudo-metal band this side of Quiet Riot. So how's he do it?

9) What do you do if you're camping out in the woods and you run out of toilet paper?

10) Another matchup. Silver Samurai, at the peak of health and in perfect shape, against Wolverine. Wolvie's just been run over by a Mack truck, beaten by a gang of thugs with canvas sacks filled with doorknobs for half an hour, run on "puree" through a Hamilton-Beach 10-speed blender, forced to listen to some guy from Jersey talk about how great Frank Sinatra is and chewed up and spit out by Fin Fang Foom. Who wins?

Thanks. May your road be harmonious also.

and its influence on young readers. They're not all wild-eyed fascists, folks, and to stereotype people that way, as is often done in the comics community, is not what one would expect from a group that is supposedly "open-minded."

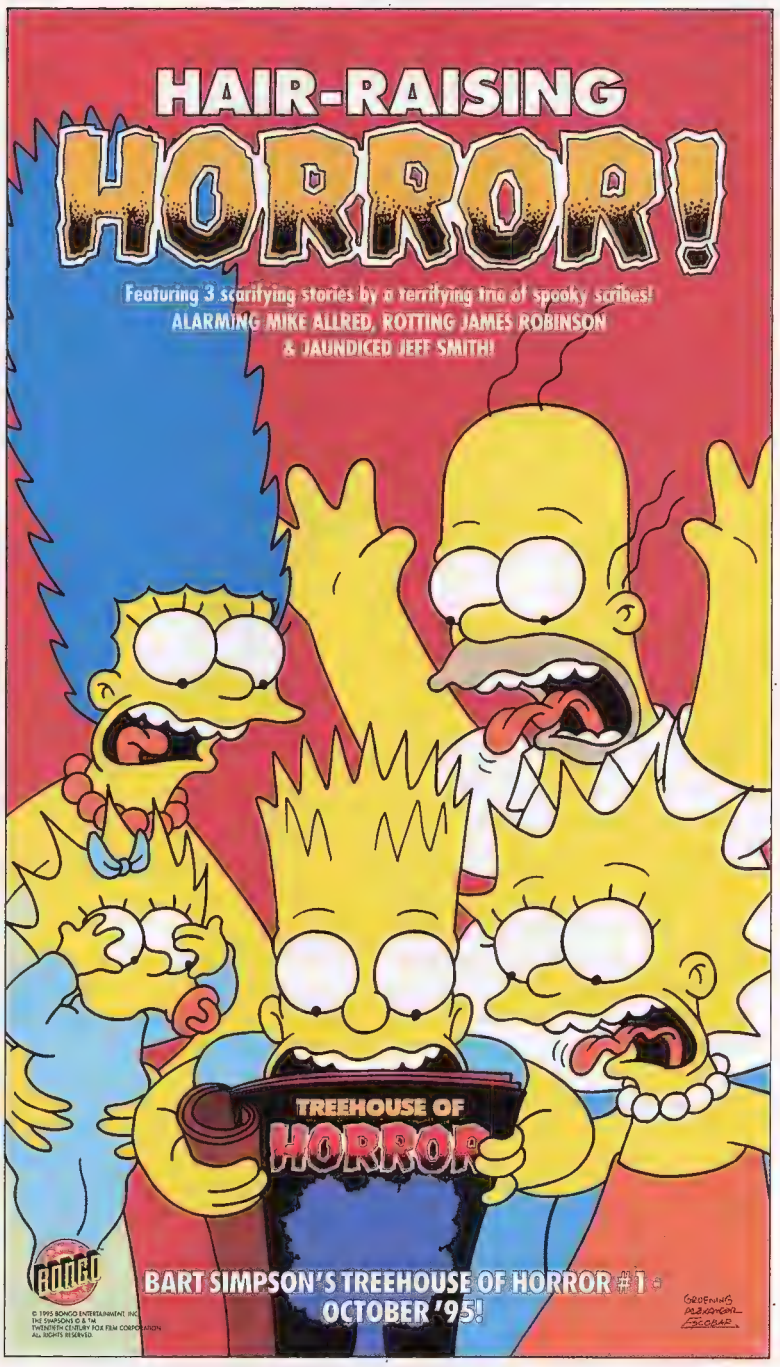
Shiloh Fulton
Temple, TX

Hmmm. So maybe we've got extremists on both sides. It's a valid point, but I've got a few of my own:

Are comics "neglecting the very age bracket that has kept it going all these years"? Remember, we are no longer living in "these years." Times have changed, tastes and sensibilities have changed, and comics have changed along with them. Today, it seems to be largely the kiddies that go for the blood-and-guts books more than anyone. From where I sit, the older crowd seems to go for something a bit deeper with a bit more characterization. The very age bracket that has kept the comic market going all these years is the very age bracket digging the violence- and sex-charged books.

***Further, I don't think a "mature readers" label necessarily means that a book is full of blood and sex—Vertigo's* Books of Magic *is a ready example of a "mature" book that is usually a hell of a lot more tame than your average issue of* X-Men.**

You raise a good point that a book today doesn't have to have the Code seal to be published, but such has not always been the case. Let us never forget that the Code has been used as a vehicle of censorship. Many comic scholars (and I actually wrote a research paper about this once in high school) support the notion that the Code was created to run Bill Gaines and EC Comics out of business in the 1950s. Nowadays, the Code is comparatively moot. Just see the next letter.



Dear Wizard,

How come the advertising for Tekno•Comix's Lady Justice says "Not Code Approved"?

Jarod Claussen
San Antonio, TX

'Cause not being Code approved is now a marketing tool. It says, "We're raw, we're bold, we don't take crap from anyone, and there just might be some boobs in here." Many publishers use claims like this to help position their books and try to sell more copies.

Someone's Got Opinions

Dear Wizard,

I have yet to figure out the hypocritical

Hey! It's Pen Pals

Get in touch with your fellow comic fans! Send your name, address, age, gender and three favorite titles to Pen Pals, c/o the Magic Words address on page 14. **NOTE:** Please write your age clearly on the envelope. Hey, make a friend!

P E N P A L S

Ali Williams
Age: 18 Sex: Male
1877 Ocean Avenue, Apt. #1A
Brooklyn, NY 11230
Likes: *Amazing Spider-Man, Spawn, Magnus*

Renée Waldrum
Age: 24 Sex: Female
2315 Further Street
Rochedale South QLD 4123, Australia
Likes: *X-titles, Spawn, Codename: Stryke Force*

Michael P. Norton
Age: 12 Sex: Male
PO Box 1455
Hobbelton, GA 30059
Likes: *Spawn, The Maxx, Youngblood*

Michael Newton
Age: 13 Sex: Male
2722 Ross Dr., Apt. #919
Moody, AL 35004
Likes: *Spawn, The Maxx, Bloodshot*

Courtney Smith
Age: 16 Sex: Female
455 Apt. E, Ponderosa Ave.
O Fallon, IL 62269
Likes: *Image titles, Gross and Superman titles*

Idris M. El-Mahdi
Age: 25 Sex: Male
26 Melrose Ave.
Fairview, Dublin 3, Ireland
Likes: *Superman, Batman, Flash*

José Miranda
Age: 17 Sex: Male
35 Snowden Ave., Apt. 1B
Ossining, NY 10562
Likes: *X-titles, F. Four* [interested in corresponding with people in hospitals]

way *Wizard* deals with dark-age poster boy Todd McFarlane. One side of the coin is apparent in Magic Words (re: the response to Matt Baird's letter in *Wizard* #47). A fanboy asks why his friends have never heard of Spawn. Your answer? "Your friends have taste." I agree.

But then, issue after issue, I turn to the back of your magazine and there it is: E.G.O. by the "*enfant terrible*" himself. There is obviously *someone* mature and educated at *Wizard* who must see McFarlane and his creation as the mindless vehicles they are. And yet we are treated to a monthly dose of inane diatribe and self-serving rhetoric by the Image idiot. Why do you continue to pander to this bozo, when you know you are only fueling Toddy's already huge ego?

I think your readership has spoken loud and clear that the foolish and childish E.G.O. is regarded as clutter. Your fans have demonstrated a desire for substance over so-called style. Why not give us all a break? Cut the E.G.O. column or give it to someone who can speak to the issues of the day, and who will not use it as a barker for his own wares.

Doc Blalock
Griffin, GA

Yeah, we are a little schizo when it comes to dealing with this McFarlane character. Speaking strictly personally here, I have no qualms whatsoever about ripping the guy a new hole every month in the letters page, simply because he's got a column of his own in these pages. But love it or hate it, you're reading it every month. How else would you know about his "inane diatribe and self-serving rhetoric"?

Personally, I think Todd McFarlane is a nice guy at heart, but he's real flaky.

Just Call Him "Sir"

Dear Magic Words,

I always thought Wolverine's last name was "San" because Mariko always called him "Logan-san." Am I right?

Eric Danner
Harvard, IL

Nope. "San" is a Japanese title of respect that essentially means "mister." So when she calls him "Logan-san," she's just saying "Mr. Logan."

Six-Fingered Jake

Dear Wizard,

Hey! Look at the cover of *Punisher 2099* #1 and you'll see that Jake Gallows has six fingers on his right hand. Check it out.

Kevin Corti
Stratford, CT

Hey! Kevin's right! Looks like a proofreader at Marvel was asleep at the switch. And Shi creator Bill Tucci seems to be doing a little six-fingered tribute himself. Check out her right hand on the cover to the Shi trade paperback. Thing is, this really does happen. It's pretty rare, but there are people who have six fingers on a hand, just like that guy in the movie The Princess Bride. These people usually have six toes on their feet, too.

Prozac Candidate

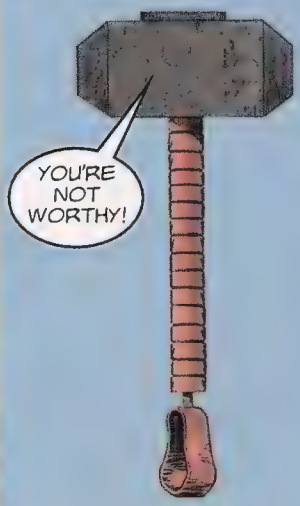
Wizard Folks,

I feel the need to address the violent tendencies that I have seen exhibited in the pages of Magic Words. What's the problem up there? Is it necessary to threaten readers with horrible pain to get a point across? And the *Wizard* readers seem likewise compelled to attempt to intimidate the *Wizard* staff with threats of physical violence.

Is this a trait inherent to comic fans? Do fans feel the need to threaten each other in order to be heard? I don't think so. I don't see threats of violence at my local comic shop. I've never broken down the door to the store to get in. I've never told the clerk that I'll turn his liver into a necklace if he doesn't serve me and serve me now! And he's never felt the need to tell me that he'll rip my face off and feed it to me if I don't move my lazy butt along.

I've started rambling, so I'll get to the point. I ask only that the *Wizard* folks

We Looked It Up



Mjol•nir (myool ner) *Norse Myth.* **1** A mystic uru hammer used by Thor, the God of Thunder to create storms; different comic companies have given unique properties to the hammer including the ability to return to its owner and being tremendously heavy and usable only by those that are worthy **2** One of the strongest weapons used by the Norse gods in their eternal struggle against the Frost Giants **3** A really funny word to use when you're doing your best "Swedish Chef" impersonation

P E N P A L S

Kerri J. Parton
Age: 20 Sex: Female
PSC Box 2005
Little Rock AFB, AR 72099
Likes: *Lady Death, Vampirella, Weapon X*

Jonathan Goodgame
Age: 12 Sex: Male
County Road 69, Rte. 3, Box 248
Goodwater, AL 35072
Likes: *X-Men, Uncanny X-Men, Fantastic Four*

Christy Lijewski
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Freeland, MD 21053
Likes: *Gen^{13}, Uncanny X-Men, Bone*

Chris Dion
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95 Upton St.
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Likes: *X-Files, Iron Man, War Machine*

Louise Visagie
Age: 19 Sex: Female
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Milnerton 7441
South Africa
Likes: *Batman, Detective Comics, Robin*

Nathan Birnley
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407 East 10th St.
Malvern, IA 51551
Likes: *Silver Surfer, Spawn, Spider-Man*

Omid "Odie" Manon
Age: 16 Sex: Male
810 S. Loyola
Tucson, AZ 85210
Likes: *Spawn, Yeng of Vampirella, Youngblood Strikefile*

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tone down the violent statements. Your readers are not violent people. I fear that your statements may push some reader over the edge, causing him to actually try to solve his problems with violence. It doesn't work that way. I say now, stop it! Stop, I say!

Really, I don't want to have to come up to the Wizard offices and kick the piss out of you people. I could do it, too! I'm 6-foot-4 and surprisingly quick at 260 lbs. I've seen pictures of some of you little people who can't weigh more than 120 lbs. even when soaking wet. I'd kick all of your asses and then I'd eat your lunches and make long distance calls from your offices!

McLauchlin, you're always talking about what a mean kidney punch you deliver. Bring it on! Pack a lunch, boy, and bring your friends, too, because it'll be an all-day job. Bring that cheese guy too. I'll give him a purple nurple so hard he'll wet his pants and scream like a girl. If I came up there, I'd give each of you new definitions for pain. I'd rip out your spleens and...

There. See what you made me do? I'm not a violent person at heart. Whatever happened just then wasn't me.

Can't we all just get along?

Tommy Acuff
Riceville, TN

"Pack a lunch and bring your friends?" That's my line!

OK, I'll try to tone it down a bit. I'm really a pretty calm person, although I do tend to get drunk, hit on women and get kind of ornery and territorial once in a while. Or so I'm told. Actually, the whole staff here is a bunch of pretty nice people. So I think we can all just get along. Punk.

Spawn or Mountain Dew?

Dear People at Wizard,

Please tell Todd McFarlane that if I had to choose between *Spawn*, *X-Men* or Sergio Aragonés' *Groo* (all of which have a $1.95 cover price), and I had only five dollars, I would buy *X-Men*, *Groo* and a 20-ounce Mountain Dew. The quality of the printing in *X-Men* is worth the price and I know that a story written by Sergio is worth reading. Plus, I like Mountain Dew.

Larry D. Lancaster
Redmond, OR

That's the power of being a consumer—sending a message with your wallet. Just ask yourself before your next purchase if you really want to buy a comic for print quality.

And in case you didn't know—those big 'Dew bottles are known as "20-ounce Quenchers" in the northern United States and the "20-ounce Boss" in the South.

Frank Miller as... The Silver Surfer?

Dear Wizard,

I am a 15-year-old boy and have read comic books most of my life. I started reading mostly Marvel and DC, but now I have started reading Image and other publishers. I hope one day to be a comic book writer myself.

But now it appears that there may not be a comic book industry left in a few years. Your article on Marvel going to exclusive distribution in *Wizard* #46 disturbs me. Some of my favorite comic book stores may go out of business, and I may have to drop some titles that I usually read because I may not be able to find them.

Marvel's exclusive distributorship reminds me of an old Fantastic Four story. Think of Marvel as Galactus, and all the comic stores as planets that Galactus destroys. Frank Miller reminds me of the Silver Surfer, one of the few who believes what Marvel is doing is wrong. He really hit the nail on the head when he said that Marvel was declaring war on the free market. I'd like to shake his hand.

Let's look at this from a comic reader's perspective—not just mine, but everyone's. Marvel's one-distributor policy is not good. Those who are regular readers of small, independent publishers may have to look elsewhere for those publishers' books, and with Marvel forcing stores out of business, good luck finding them.

Keith Melcher
Lead, SD

Now that's quite the analogy!

Marvel's exclusive distribution deal will make things more confusing and will bite into the wallets of many comic retailers. It will be very unpopular. It will result in some store closings. But it won't be catastrophic. There's no doubt that the present distribution system has been turned on its ear, but this will not kill the comic market. Does the new Marvel distributor deal suck? Sure. Will we all get over it? In time. Will all of "we" still be around? Nope. But we'll live through it.

And since when is Frank Miller suddenly the Patron Saint of All Things Good?

Jubilee is No Closer to Dying of Old Age

Dear Wizard,

I have a few questions for you:

1) Does Jubilee drink from the fountain of youth or something? She was 13 years old when she joined the X-Men ages ago, and now in *Generation X*, they say she's still 13. How old *should* she be?

2) Why is there never any reference to a superhero using the bathroom? Or don't they do that?

3) I know Wolverine has a mutant healing factor, but does this keep him from aging too?

4) Who invented chewing gum and why does the gum last, but not the flavor?

Andy Deck
Richmond, VA

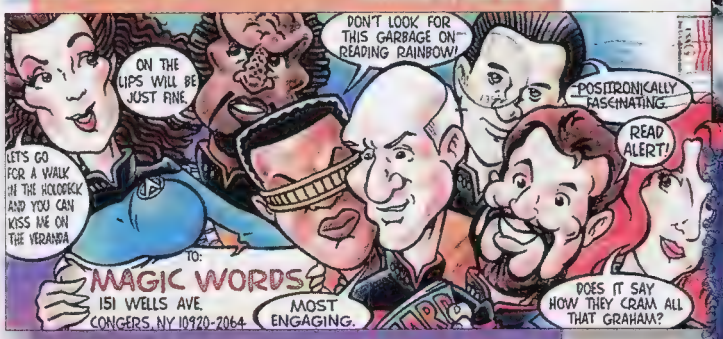
1) Ah, it doesn't really matter. Time flows differently in comics than it does in reality.

2) We'll be answering that rather—ahem—sticky question right here very

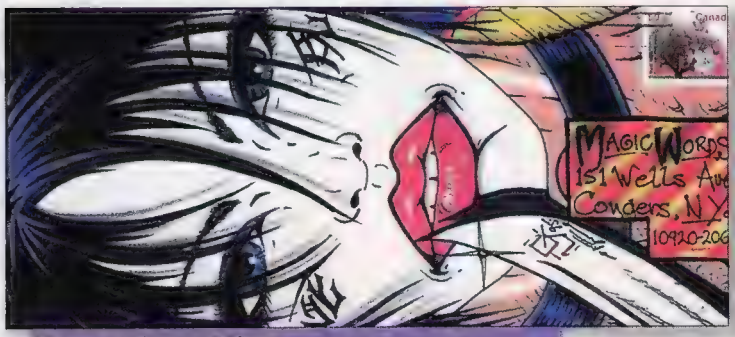
PATIENCE IS A
VIRTUA

LETTER ART

Fans who get their letter art printed will each receive a copy of *Lynch Mob #3* signed by Greg Capullo, a Spider-Man animated series acetate signed by Stan "The Man" Lee, the issue of *Wizard* in which their envelope appeared signed by the entire *Wizard* creative staff, and a funky *Wizard* cap! The creator of the best envelope wins all that neat stuff, *plus* an original *Dr. Strange* page by Peter Gross! Artists: please include a clearly printed return address on the **back** of your envelope. And thanks to Marvel Comics for providing the Grand Prize!



Jas Ingram



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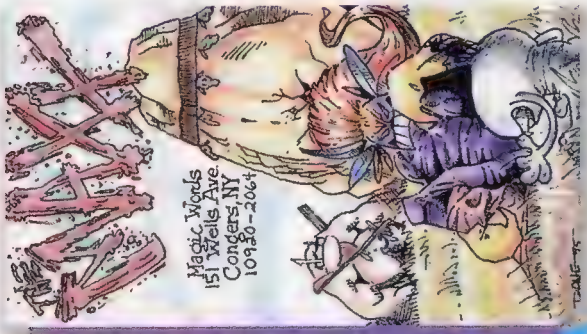
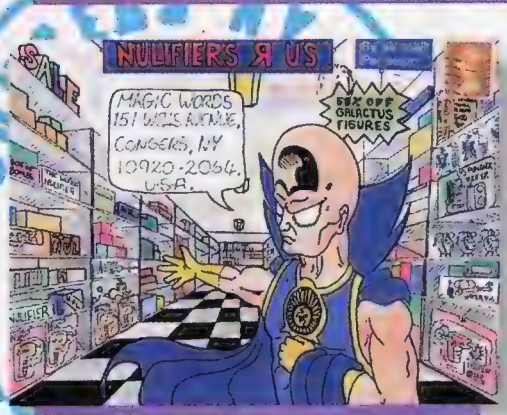


David Cole



Dene Conway

Rainmaker is a What???

Hey Wiz,

Whoa! In *Gen*[13] #2, page 11, Rainmaker touches Freefall's butt and is talking pretty weird. Is Rainmaker a lesbian or is she just joking? My friends and I just gots to know!

Sean Corrales
Lawton, OK

She's a lesbian. And, according to our ol' buddy Jim Lee, "We didn't just make this up on the spot. We knew from day one that Sarah [Rainmaker] was different from the other kids. It's just that it made no sense to drop it into the 'we're-on-the-run-from-the-government' storyline."

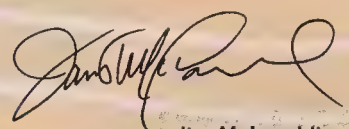
By the way, this was a big letter topic this month. We started seeing mail on it only days after the issue hit.

And as a final note, back in Wizard #49's Magic Words, it was mentioned that while Clark Kent had no middle name in comics, the TV show Lois & Clark has given him the middle name "Jerome." This middle name was provided by DC Comics at the request of the show's producers and is intended as a tribute to Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel. Pretty cool, huh?

soon. Tune in and bring your own roll of toilet paper.

3) It doesn't keep him from aging—he gets older just like anyone. It does, however, slow down the degenerative effects of aging.

4) As near as we can tell, chewing gum was invented in 1880 by a druggist in Louisville, Ky., named John Colgan. The reason the flavor goes away, is so you'll have to go out and buy more. It's just another one of the many ways that The Man tries to keep you down.



—Jim McLauchlin

Jim McLauchlin used to eat Cheez-Its and mustard sandwiches when he was a kid, which probably goes a long way toward explaining why he is the way he is today.

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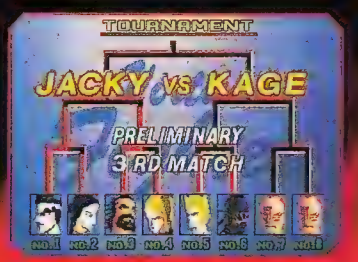

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MARVEL VS. DC:
Massive Universe Crossover

John T. Burr

New FOX TV mascot revealed to public at national media show. "You guys see that WB crap? 'Herman's Head' looked like Shakespeare compared to that @S#&!," complained furry canine.

John T. Burr

Cosmic powered goliath put down after running amok at local comic book show. "What do you mean this ain't Alicia? I can't see crap in this suit."

John T. Burr

Latest version of the Iron Man armor revealed to fans. "But... he's got no legs," said confused onlooker.

Ever wonder if Superman could beat the Hulk? Or if Wolverine could rip Lobo to shreds? Well, now all will be told as Marvel and DC Comics are coordinating a massive line crossover beginning in December. And what's more, readers will actually be able to choose the victors of the above battles and many others.

DC versus Marvel/Marvel versus DC is the first all-out, full-scale, total blowout meeting of the DC and Marvel Universes. This massive crossover will be presented in a four-issue mini-series where two estranged entities do battle and use heroes from both universes as pawns in the struggle.

Among the preliminary bouts that every fan has thought about will be Flash vs. Quicksilver, Sub-Mariner vs. Aquaman, and Green Lantern vs. Silver Surfer. Other tussles will be Robin vs. Jubilee, Thor vs. Captain Marvel, and Elektra vs. Catwoman.

Touted as the "Main Event," however, are the pivotal battles such as Batman vs. Captain America, Hulk vs. Superman, Wolverine vs. Lobo, Superboy vs. Spider-Man, and Wonder Woman vs. Storm.

Through a special ballot, readers will be able to vote on the outcome of all the struggles of the "Main Event" by giving their ballot to their local retailer. Ballots will be available with *Wizard* #53, *DC versus Marvel* #1 and at your favorite comic book store. The winners of the battles will be revealed through the course of the mini-series.

Co-writing the mini-series are Ron Marz (issues #1 and #3) and Peter David (#2 and #4). The art chores are shared by pencilers Dan Jurgens and Claudio Castellini with inks by Joe Rubinstein and Paul Neary.

Said Jurgens, "This may be the coolest thing I've ever worked on! It's what my friends and I used to dream about when we were 14, but never believed would actually happen."

A source at DC teased that November's *Green Lantern/Silver Surfer* crossover one-shot by Ron Marz, Darryl Banks and Terry Austin "contains a minor lead-in" to the crossover mini-series.

DC is publishing the first and last issue, while Marvel produces the second and third. Each issue will be 48 pages. *DC versus Marvel* #1 ships December 12. ■ *John B. Lacey*

ahead

MILLER'S NEW SIN CITY!

NIMOY TO WRITE PRIMORTALS!

WENDY PINI—EXHIBITIONIST!

AND COMPANY UPDATES!

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Dracula

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VESS Plans Big For BALLADS & SAGAS

Popular Vertigo artist Charles Vess will introduce his own self-published comic this October when he releases the first of a six-issue, bimonthly series called *The Book of Ballads and Sagas*. If the series is well-received, Vess has long-term plans that include producing a CD of the ballads adapted in the series.

Illustrated by Vess, each issue offers two stories adapted from original Irish and Scottish ballads by high-profile comics and short-story writers. It also will include a new installment of the Nordic saga "Skade," written by Rob Walton (*Ragmop*). The 32-page, black-and-white comic will be published by Vess' Green Man Press.

Vess already has his line-up set for all six issues. It includes Neil Gaiman and Sharyn McCrumb (an Edgar Award-winning writer) in issue one; Jeff Smith and Midori Snyder in #2; Elaine Lee and Delia Sherman in #3; Ellen Kushner and Elizabeth Willey in #4; Emma Bull and Terri Windling in #5; and Lee Smith and Jane Yolen in #6.

"My ultimate aim is to collect the entire series in a hardcover book and create a CD of all the adapted ballads," Vess explained. In fact, based on initial response to a 28-page ashcan produced for August's San Diego Comic-Con, he may keep the series running even longer. "It's been incredible," he said. "Self-publishing is a little bit scary, but the retailers and readers have been giving me great feedback, and I'm enjoying it."

Vess also is working with Neil Gaiman on an illustrated novella called *Stardust*. As yet unscheduled, the project will be published in four parts by Vertigo and then will be collected into a hardcover edition. The story centers on a man living beside a high wall abutting Gaiman's Faerie who falls in love with a lady who falls from above and lands on the other side. ■ *Craig Shutt*

The Spectre Haunts America

Starting late this year, DC's green-and-white ghost, The Spectre, will begin a multi-issue epic entitled "Haunting of America" beginning in issue #37 and lasting until late 1996. Even though the storyline will run long, scripter John Ostrander promised that many issues will be self-contained, and that while the beginning of this story would be a great time to sample *The Spectre*, a new reader could jump in at any time.

According to Ostrander, the famous Golden Age character, Uncle Sam, will return to the DC Universe in this storyline. In the first issue of this epic, The Spectre encounters the "American Talisman" and learns the true origin of Uncle Sam. He will then go on a hunt for the pieces of the American Talisman, and a mysterious group called "The National Interest," who want to recreate Uncle Sam in their image. This premise will enable Ostrander to examine America and compare "what we are meant to be, and what we have become, in the past, present and future. For instance we will have the Spectre traveling to Boston and touch upon both the Salem witch trials and the trials of modern professional women in the corporate world. The Spectre will visit ghost towns, the Wild West and explore America's treatment of Native Americans." ■ *Henry Colonna*

MILLER Tries New Approach with November's SIN CITY

Frank Miller fans will get a special Christmas treat with the release of *Sin City: Silent Night* from Dark Horse Comics in late November, according to editor Bob Schreck, who called the one-shot "Frank's boldest Sin City project yet."

Miller takes a new approach to storytelling in the book, Schreck said, as well as rendering the art in an unusual and impressive fashion.

"Frank has tried something different in this issue," Schreck explained. "The story virtually rewrote itself several times and went from an original shorter version to an entire issue and the way he reveals it to us is definitely unusual for him. The result is a book with a strong dose of the Christmas spirit resonating in its pages, together with a healthy dose of violence and mayhem, because, hey, it may be Christmas, but the story features Marv, everybody's favorite anti-hero."

Miller's artistic experimentation on *Silent Night* will not be immediately noticeable to the untrained eye, Shreck noted. "Frank did the entire issue using just a brush rather than a combination of pen and brush. It is so good, so perfect, that the average reader probably won't see any difference, but artists and editors in the business will be astonished to see that this was done with no other implement but a brush."

Even the cover of the book will be strikingly different, Schreck said, featuring "Miller's distinctive delineation and Lynn Varley's subtle colors, while being otherwise unadorned. I think fans will come to think of this cover much like the one on the Beatles' *White Album*." ■ *Jack Curtin*

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Nimoy writes Primortals

Star Trek fans take note: Leonard Nimoy will do his first comic book work this fall as a co-writer on the origin mini-series of Tekno•Comix's *Primortals* title, a series conceived by Nimoy with science-fiction giant Isaac Asimov.

Nimoy, known to fans worldwide as Spock on "Star Trek," will co-plot the two-issue *Primortals: Origins* mini-series, slated for November and December of this year, as part of Tekno's one-year anniversary. The ongoing series skips those months and returns in January with *Primortals* #13.

The mini-series will explore the primordial beginnings of the Primortals, who began on Earth but were taken offworld by an alien race called the Majae, where they evolved and eventually established an empire. At the beginning of the ongoing series, the Primortals have received a signal from the Voyager space probe, and, for various reasons, several return toward Earth.

"Some very interesting political and social questions will be coming up in the near future as we get more into the interaction between [*Primortals* villain] Zeerus and the politicians, the press and the public," Nimoy said. "I think those threads have been very intriguingly set up so far. Now we will start to see more of the payoff."

Primortals: Origins #1, like all Tekno comics in November, will come polybagged with a free Tekno back-issue included as part of its one-year anniversary celebration. One out of every 10 books will include a gold-plate signature from one of Tekno's first three series creators, including Nimoy. ■ *Andrew Steven Harris*

company updates

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM

Dave Sim and Gerhard make the next stop on their Cerebus World Tour when they hit "Gatherum '95" at the Mesa Community Center in Mesa, Ariz. Stop by on November 11th and you can also say howdy to Tera S. Wood, James Owen, Larry Marder, Jim Valentino and a whole slew of other creators. Coming in October is *Cerebus* #199 (you know—the one *before* the big #200), which Sim calls the "Special Injury to Eye issue." Then be on the lookout for #200, where a certain aardvark is seen wearing an eye patch.

AC COMICS

In November, AC Comics unleashes *FemForce Bad Girl Backlash*, which features the art of female artists selected in a nationwide art contest. Part of the proceeds will be donated to Easter Seals.

ADHESIVE COMICS

The *death* of Too Much Coffee Man??? It happens in his fifth issue, due in January. Creator Shannon Wheeler is also planning a Christmas Special.

ARCHIE COMICS

Betty Cooper's at the center of at least two October issues, including *Betty* #33, in which she becomes the Super Sleuther, again to find a missing film director, while Jason Blossom (Cheryl's brother!) does everything he can to win her over in *Betty & Veronica Spectacular* #17. A brand-new Turtles title takes off in October, as the three-issue *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Year of the Turtle* mini-series presents a new look at the heroes. Written by Dan Slott (*Ren & Stimpy*), it sets up some serious changes in the Turtles universe and the upcoming ongoing series.

ARIA PRESS

Look for a beautiful pin-up book called *Visions of A Distant Soil* this fall. It'll have works by several well-known artists, including Buzz, Bill Tucci, Gerhard, Curt Swan, José Luis Garcia Lopez, Jim Valentino, Keith Giffen, David Mack and Mike Kaluta, plus a special piece by Nick Cardy (*Teen Titans*), who hasn't worked on comics for 20 years.

BLACKOUT COMICS

Blackout Comics starts a new series about vampires in December. *Jugular* #0 will feature a segment written by Mike Baron and drawn by Neil Vokes. The $2.95 issue will also feature a cover by Christopher Moeller.

BONGO COMICS

Can anyone predict what will happen when Bart and Milhouse create their own superhero, and take on the publishing world? Watch the copyright infringements fly in October's *Simpsons Comics* #13, which is flip-booked by *Wedgie Comics*, starring Springfield's "bad boys" Dolph, Kearney and Jimbo Jones.

CALIBER PRESS

The award-winning *Negative Burn* anthology will win over more readers when it expands to 64 pages in October. Along with the regular Alan Moore and Brian Bolland contributions, issue #28 has a story by Mark Verheiden and a sketchbook section by painter Ray Lago, all for $3.95. Under Caliber's Big Bang imprint, an official Image/Caliber crossover happens when the Silver Age version of ShadowHawk teams up with the Silver Age Knight Watchman in October's *Big Bang* #5.

CHAOS! COMICS

Get into the minds of those Chaos! folks when *Evil Ernie: The Resurrection—Director's Cut* hits the scene in November. For the first time, the intense preparation and production of *The Resurrection* mini-series is displayed before your eyes, including character development and sketches, plus script pages and layouts. It's capped off with interviews with Brian Pulido and Steven Hughes (who supplies the cover and all interior art). This black and white, $4.95 book in premium format and limited to only 15,000 copies will thrill anyone into the creation of comics.

CLAYPOOL COMICS

Good news for *Elvira* fans: The real-life Elvira recently renewed her comic publishing agreement with Claypool. That means the company will continue to publish the series, the 30th issue of which has the Mistress of the Dark do a swimsuit photo shoot for a sports magazine, and further along her romance with Hutchcliff. There's also a special text feature on Elvira's comic convention debut in this October shipping issue.

COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

On September 22nd, the results of Mike Diana's appeal to the Florida Appellate Court will be announced. If Diana's sentence of three years probation, frequent house searches and a $3,000 fine for publishing *Boiled Angel*—a fanzine deemed obscene—goes through, the CBLDF plans to take his case to the Supreme Court of Florida. After Neil Gaiman's well attended midnight reading of stories at July's San Diego Comic Con brought the organization over $3,000, the writer agreed to go for it again, this time at the Palace of Fine Arts in San Francisco, Calif. on Halloween night, again benefiting the Fund.

COMICO/ NORTHSTAR

In *Elementals* #3, the superteam visits its old HQ, Nacht Island, which they discover has been take over by alien demons. This October release has two different covers, both by Image's Marat Mychaels. Speaking of covers, *Oblivion* #4's is by Dave Gibbons (*Watchmen*; *Martha Washington*).

CRUSADE COMICS

The *Shi/Cyblade Special* brings together several independent creators for the first time, including Dave

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Red Dragon: American Manga

Revitalized publisher Comico continues its resurgence into mainstream comics with *Red Dragon*, a superhero book inspired by Hong Kong cinema, Eastern mysticism, quantum physics and manga.

Red Dragon is the story of the most powerful being on the planet, a man who is possessed by the spirit of an ancient Chinese dragon. When the story begins, he is the secret weapon of communist China. Once the Dragon realizes he's been duped and manipulated by the reds, however, he goes independent and moves to Hong Kong where he battles local villains.

The series will be written by Brian Azzarello, with interior art by Tony Akins (*Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi—The Freedom Nadd Uprising*) and covers by painter Simon Bisley. "Red Dragon is the Chinese Superman," said Azzarello. "My hope is that people who don't normally buy independents or superhero comics will give *Red Dragon* a shot."

Akins' art can best be described as a hybrid of manga and American-style superhero comics.

Red Dragon hits the stands this October with a cover price of $2.50. ■ *Christopher Griffen*

company updates

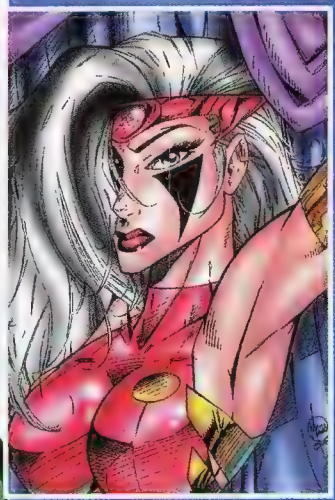
Sim, Joe Quesada, Jimmy Palmiotti, Jeff Smith, Evan Dorkin and Steve Bissette, all of whom bring their characters—like Cerebus, Bone and Ash—to this crossover book, set for late September. Also look for the debut of Crusade's new characters, the Atomic Angels in this issue. ... Anyone who missed the rare *Shi #2* can pick up the fully recolored reprint *Shi #2 Fan Appreciation Edition* in November. The $2.95 book has an intro by Stan (*Usagi Yojimbo*) Sakai. ... The Japanese heroine dons a brand-new, armored costume—for better protection against the Naro Warriors—in issue #8, set for early 1996 release. ... Speaking of '96, Shi can take you through the year in the *Twelve Deadly Months of Shi 1996 Calendar*, which offers 13 new Shi works by her creator Bill Tucci plus some cool text pieces, and is out in October for $12.95.

DC COMICS

There is a rumor circulating that writer/artist John Byrne will be handling a DC/Marvel crossover pairing Batman and Captain America, though in an "Elseworlds" format setting the story during World War II. Neither publisher would either confirm or deny. More news as it comes. ... Two unscheduled ongoing series are coming soon from Vertigo. The first is *House of Secrets*, by Steven T. Seagle (*Sandman Mystery Theatre*) and Teddy Kristiansen (*Sandman Midnight Theatre*), for the Vertigo imprint. In this series, according to Vertigo, "wayward souls are placed on trial for the truths they've kept hidden in their lives." Also, an ongoing *Phantom Stranger* series is due, though it is currently unscheduled, with no creative team yet. We'll keep you posted. ... John Constantine's only hope to remain sane is the mysterious female starring in Vertigo's *The Horrorist*, a two-issue series beginning in October by Jamie Delano (*Hellblazer*) and David Lloyd (*V for Vendetta*). ... It's "The X-Files" meets *The Celestine Prophecy*," according to Vertigo, with November's ongoing *Seekers* by J.M. DeMatteis (*Moonshadow*) and rotating artists including Jon J Muth (*Moonshadow*), Michael Zulli (*The Sandman*) and Glenn Barr (*Brooklyn Dreams*).

EENIEWEENIE COMICS

October sees the release of *The Hoon #3*, where your favorite calzone-eatin' hero continues his travels from Supertown. Little does he know that Punxsutawney, Penn., is just chock full of action and adventure.



ENTITY COMICS

Coming this November is *Nira X #1* (starting its third series) by creator Bill Maus. This time Nira and Kathryn take a little vacation in the Caribbean. But you just know that their vacation's gonna be cut short when they meet Delta Void, the island's Ganglord.

FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS

October sees the release of *Love & Rockets #49*, which tells the story of Maggie's impending marriage! Things really heat up as the series prepares for next year's big 50th issue! ... Congrats to Fantagraphics Books and Chris Ware's *The ACME Novelty Library* for winning five Harvey awards this year. *ACME Novelty Library* took Best New Series. ... October's *Tumbling Boxes #1* features creator Reed Waller's first full-length comic outside of his popular *Omaha, the Cat Dancer*. The 24-page comic tells just what happens when home video adds an all-new level to sex in front of the TV. Yep, this one's definitely for you mature readers out there.

FIASCO COMICS, INC.

The biggest fight scene the universe has ever seen comes to its conclusion in *Bizarre Heroes #14* shipping this October. The search for Megaton Man (Woo!) ends and the future of the series is up in the air! A mere $2.95 will getcha a snazzy copy o' this humorous book.

FOUR COLOR IMAGES

From September 15 to October 31 is the "Images of The Wake" exhibit, which spotlights Michael Zulli's pencil art from Vertigo's *The Sandman #70-#72*.

PARADISE FOUND...

HEPCATS GOES GRAPHIC

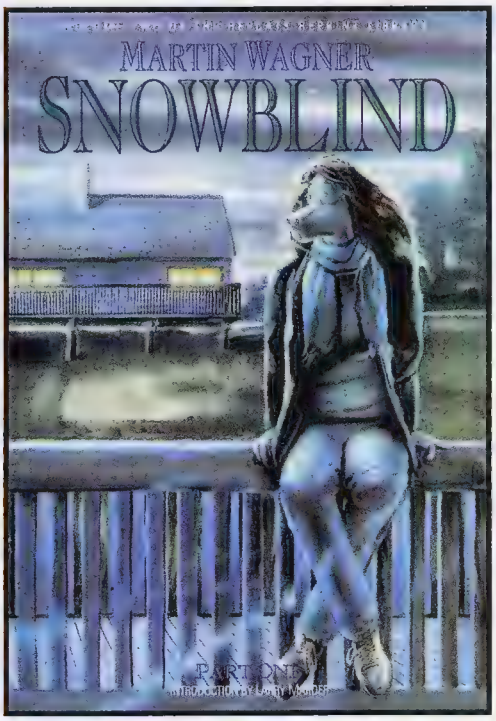
There's good news and bad news for all of you *Hepcats* fans out there. The bad news is that issue #14, which ships later this fall, will be the last issue of the critically acclaimed anthropomorphic comic. The good news, however, is that creator Martin Wagner will now be publishing *Hepcats* in a graphic novel format, insuring you more bang for your buck.

The main reasons behind the switch, according to Wagner, are the fast-paced changes in the comics industry as well as his own difficulty in affording the release of comics on a regular schedule. By publishing graphic novels, Wagner will not only be saving money, but fans won't be discouraged with an irregular schedule.

"Every day it seems the decision to go trades-only is the right one," said Wagner. "The fans' only real gripe with *Hepcats* is the lateness. And the reason they're griping is because they genuinely like the series and want to see more. If they didn't care, no one would be giving me any grief about the schedule. I'll simply produce a complete book and announce it when it's done and no sooner."

Hepcats #13, which should be out in late summer, will include an extensive editorial by Wagner explaining his publishing intentions. Following #14 will be the *Snowblind Part Two* trade volume which includes the full story from what would have been *Hepcats* #11-#20. It's tentatively scheduled for early 1997. Once *Snowblind* is completed, Wagner hopes to release a new Hepcats graphic novel every year or so.

In the meantime, fans can get on Wagner's mailing list and receive three newsletters a year relating the status of the current storyline. To sign up, send your address on a postcard to Double Diamond Press, P.O. Box 27157, Austin, TX 78755-2157 or send e-mail to hepcats@eden.com. ■ *John B. Lacey*



company updates

FRIENDS OF LULU

At the San Diego Comic Con in July, Friends of Lulu elected its Board of Directors, which include Jackie Estrado (Eisner awards administrator) as president, Deni Loubert (artists' representative, Creative Interests Agency) as secretary, Heidi MacDonald (editor, *Disney Adventures*) as v.p.—industry issues, and Martha Thomases (publicity manager, DC Comics) as v.p.—public communications. Friends of Lulu's goal is to involve more female readers and creators in comics.

HARRIS COMICS

Remember Vampirella's battle with an evil troll in *Vengeance of Vampirella* #1? Well, as Vampi's future starts unravelling, that story from her past is retold in issue #21, from the troll's point of view! Also, the little bugger's brother Kutthroat appears, looking for nothing more than revenge. Joining this issue in December is *Vampirella Strikes* #2, which sports a Mike Deodato Jr. cover and includes one of those snappy limited-edition promo cards from Topps' Vampirella Gallery set, also out that month!

HIGH IMPACT STUDIOS

Newcomer David Germaine will pencil *Double Impact* #4, to be released in November and inked by Rick Lyon. The book's writer and regular artist Ricky Carrolero (who writes #4) will return for #5 in January, after his break for that month's major *Hellina/Double Impact* crossover with Lightning Comics.

IMAGE COMICS

• Ballistic Studios/Top Cow Productions, Inc.

The Ballistic Studios artists unveil lingerie like you've never seen it before in *Top Cow Secrets—Special Winter Lingerie Edition* ($2.95), a 32-page full-color book showing what the most popular characters are wearing beneath their crime-fighting uniforms. Cyblade, Witchblade, Velocity, Ballistic and more will be featured in this December issue.

•Extreme Studios

When Prophet gets in trouble, who's he gonna call? Why, Avengelyne, of course. Avengelyne comes to the aid of Prophet in the *Avengelyne/Prophet* crossover, featuring work by Rob Liefeld, Stephen Platt and Mike Deodato Jr. The full-color hardbound edition ($24.95) explodes on the scene in December. *Maximage* #1 ($2.50) debuts in December, leading into the multi-part Extreme Destroyer crossover in January. Eric Stephenson handles writing chores, with Luke Ross on art. Joe Quesada draws the Extreme Universe poster ($5.95), featuring a collage piece of Extreme characters, including Bloodstrike, Brigade, Chapel, Glory, Knightmare, NewMen, Prophet, Supreme and Youngblood.

• Highbrow Entertainment

Rumor has it that those funky Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, formerly published by Mirage Studios and now at Archie, will be moving to Image under the guidance of Mr. Erik Larsen. No papers have been signed yet, but look for more info in the coming months! . Vanguard and Wally launch an attack against the very dangerous Amok in *Vanguard* #2. The issue, shipping this October, also reveals Amok's origin and tells ya just why this guy wants to destroy that whole Earth thingie.

• Maximum Press

Rob Liefeld, Arthur Adams, Stephen Platt and Larry Marder team up on the new schizophrenic anthology series, *Asylum* #1 ($2.50), featuring original serialized stories from titles including *Avengelyne*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Warchild* and *Tales of the Beanworld*.

...OR PARADISE LOST?

MAGIC The Gathering™

HOMELANDS™

Prestige Format Comic

Nothing is what it seems in the mystical world of Homelands.

- Based upon the highly anticipated Magic: The Gathering expansion deck
- Cover painted by legendary artists Greg and Tim Hildebrandt
- Story by D.G. Chichester and Painted by Rebecca Guay
- *Includes one of three rare and powerful cards from the Homelands expansion set*

Wizards® OF THE COAST®

Unlock the Mysterious World of Homelands.

Acclaim comics, inc.

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Wendy Pini Exhibit Previews Elfquest Film

Elfquest co-creator Wendy Pini has taken the plunge into the fine-art world. The first major showing of her original artwork was recently held at the Circle Gallery in Chicago while the annual Chicago Comic-Con was in town. A number of Pini's paintings, including pages from Warp Graphics' *Elfquest* book along with her adaptation of TV's *Beauty and the Beast*, were placed on display—and many pieces were sold for top dollar ($450 for black-and-white pages, and up to $4,000 for oil paintings).

"I was just bowled over," said Pini. "It was a surprisingly successful show—surprising because it was put together in a matter of weeks, and usually these things take six months to organize. All the while, I was out on the West Coast working my head off on the Elfquest movie." The movie is an animated feature based on Warp Graphics' popular series. Edward Pressman, who brought Conan to the big screen, recently announced that he had reached an agreement with Warp to produce the film.

Pini admitted that the art exhibit was solid publicity for the forthcoming film. "It was meant to be the first showing of my artwork in a gallery environment," she said, "but we had some production art from the movie in the show, too, and we were happy to talk about the film."

The art exhibit was successful enough to bring Pini back for more.

"We're making arrangements with Circle Gallery to show artwork from a children's book that Warp Graphics is bringing out in November called *A Gift of Her Own*," she said. "It's our first children's book—text with illustrations—and the artwork will be on display in New York for the holidays." ■ *Clifford Meth*

company updates

• Shadowline, Ink
This November sees the release of *ShadowHawks of Legend*. This quarterly squarebound book contains a number of self-contained short stories centering on (you guessed it) the ShadowHawks throughout history. The first issue features such talent as Alan Moore, Kurt Busiek, Beau Smith, Jim Valentino and Stan Sakai.

• WildStorm Productions
Spend your Halloween this year with WildStorm as the company offers you *WildStorm's Chamber of Horrors*. This 48-page issue will scare the bejeezus outta ya, courtesy o' some spooky tales by Ron Marz, Bernie Wrightson and more! Featuring a Simon Bisley cover, this baby ships in October. . . . The *WildStorm Rising* trade paperback collects the entire crossover in one nifty volume this October.

KITCHEN SINK PRESS
What do you do when alien invaders have ravaged the Earth? Why, you grab what's left of your fellow humans, get some help from some genetically engineered, intelligent gorillas and prepare for war! That's just what happens in *Grease Monkey #1* by Tim Eldred. This bimonthly book retails for $3.50 and ships in October. . . . The bimonthly horror title *Death Rattle* begins this October with some frightful tales by Mark Nelson, Tim Eldred, Mark Schultz and more.

LIGHTNING COMICS
Hellina/Catfight #1 brings Lightning's two main heroines together for the first time in October. Along with a story featuring the duo taking on the Prince of Sommia, this issue offers a Hellina/Catfight pin-up gallery, all for $2.75. There's also a commemorative edition with a gold metallic ink cover signed by creator Steven Zyskowski, for $5.95, and a signed nude-covered edition for $9.95.

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS
Congrats to LNS on opening the London Night Gallery in August. This Hickory, N.C. store will be a showroom of Razor material and other merchandise and collectibles, including original artwork. . . . A new character named Morbid Angel is the company's first attempt at a male character. He not only gets his own one shot book in October but is the catalyst for all of LNS' 1996 titles.

MALIBU COMICS
Malibu teams up with film director James Cameron to launch two *Terminator 2* comic book mini-series, both starting in November. First up is the four-issue *T2: Cybernetic Dawn*, which picks up where the *T2* film left off and is set in the present. The four-issue *T2: Nuclear Twilight* takes place in the year 2029 during the future war, and features a grown John Connor. Plus, there's a special #0 issue that concludes both storylines in March.

MARS MEDIA GROUP
Tony Caputo's *The Complete Guide to Publishing a Successful Comic Book* was so successful itself that it's going into an updated and expanded second printing in early November. Extra information and graphics will be added to this 225-page edition, which will stay at $24.95 and will be available at comic stores.

MILESTONE MEDIA
Interesting insights into Icon's origin are introduced in October's *Icon #32*, while writer Ivan Velez Jr. returns to *Blood Syndicate* with issue #33 (a 99-cent Reader's Choice issue), accompanied by new penciler Jeff Moore.

PENTHOUSE COMIX
October sees the release of three Penthouse products. The first, *Omni Comix #4*, features the continuing saga of the T H U N D E R Agents by Paul Guiocy and Terry Austin, along with a number of other stories by Alan Davis, Ernie Colón, Mark Farmer and more. . . . *Penthouse Men's Adventure Comix #5* features work by Kevin Maguire, Dan Barry and others, plus a Jim Steranko cover. . . . *Penthouse Comix #10* contains work by Matt Haley, Mark Texeira, Dan Barry and more.

RIVAL PRODUCTIONS
The war continues this October in *Eye of the Storm #5*, as Killian and Finesse meet up with Sinclair and his wardog, Rott. Also, Dominion starts installing satellites that will help speed up the harvesting process.

Photo by M Ortega

DARK OBSESSIONS

INDUSTRIAL GOTHIC

Beauty... It sure as hell isn't skin deep

By Ted McKeever

Five-issue miniseries

She is humanity's pain... and John Constantine's last hope

By Jamie Delano and David Lloyd

Two-issue painted miniseries

THE HORRORIST

COMING IN OCTOBER

Suggested for mature readers

DC COMICS

The Horrorist ©1995 Jamie Delano and David Lloyd. Industrial Gothic TM and ©Union City Inc. Vertigo TM DC Comics ©1995. All Rights Reserved.

Hendrix Hits Comics in Voodoo Child

Jimi Hendrix lives, thanks to *Voodoo Child*, a 128-page, painted hardcover offering a unique view at the life of this late, guitar great. The book, produced by Berkshire Studio and coming in November from Kitchen Sink and Viking-Penguin, is "actually a biography in visual form," according to artist Bill Sienkiewicz. "It's factual and there are also elements of some mysticism, because Jimi was into that." Helping with the flow of the book was Spirit creator Will Eisner.

"He was the spiritual guru and technical advisor in terms of narrative and everything else," said Sienkiewicz. "His job was to look at my stuff and suggest possible alternate approaches. We sort of had a meeting of the minds. Y'know, I've been doing this for about 15 years, and I think I've got some of it down. And then Will comes along and shows me what's what."

Eisner also gave assistance to Marty Green, director of the Berkshire Studio and creator/producer of *Voodoo Child*. "He is the grand-master of sequential art," he said, "and we would discuss the various unique aspects of what I was trying to accomplish. *Voodoo Child* pushes all the boundaries of the graphic narrative format that Will pioneered."

As an added enticement, a compact disc—*Jimi by Himself: The Home Recordings*—will be packaged with all copies of *Voodoo Child*. This CD contains approximately 30 minutes of rare and previously unreleased tracks.

Berkshire Studios has many other projects planned. "We're going to create more Bio-Graphics—more music people in the category of John Lennon and Bob Dylan," said Green. "We're also working on a series called *Jammin'*, which will put the top artists and the top songwriters in the world together." ■ *Ruth Morrison*

company updates

SANCTUARY PRESS

Jimmy Palmiotti (*Ash*) will be inking *Xenya #5*, out in December. Also, a major surprise artist will be doing one of this issue's stories, as will popular *Magic: The Gathering* card artist Richard Kane Ferguson, returning to the series that started his career.

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT

October's *Poison Elves #6* will be a major issue in the series, as it introduces Lester Gran, a human enemy from Lusiphur's past. Their meeting won't be all that joyful, for the two were once thieves who robbed each other! ... Also in October comes the first *Animal Mystic* poster, featuring the beautiful cover to the title's first issue, painted by Dark One and going for $5.95.

TEKNO•COMIX

Walt Simonson will be supplying the covers to *Mike Danger #1-#9*, as well as handling a number of *Primordials* covers later on in the year. ... In celebration of its one-year anniversary, all of the company's books shipping in November will come polybagged with a free Tekno back issue.

TOPPS COMICS

The debut issue of *The X-Files Magazine* ships in November. It's fully authorized and features an interview with series creator Chris Carter plus an eight-page comic story by the *X-Files* comic team of Stefan Petrucha and Charles Adlard.

WARP GRAPHICS

Now truly young readers can take part in the Elf fun. Shipping in November is the 48-page, full-color *A Gift of Her Own* by Wendy Pini. The $16.95 hardcover tells the story of a young human girl named Elmy who is picked on at home and learns some valuable lessons when she runs away and discovers the Wolfriders. Neat!

SMALL PUBLISHER OUTTAKES

Rare Breed returns in November at the newly formed Chrysalis Studios. The creator-owned series follows creator Zoe Rochelle from Dark Moon Productions. Rochelle will continue to write and pencil the bimonthly series. ... In November, Edge Publishing launches *Victory Blaze*, a new ongoing quarterly series about a female superhero. ... Mike Wieringo (*Robin*) will pencil the cover to Explorer Press' *Explorers #2* in October. ... In December, Patchwork Press's *The Oz Squad # 7* has the Tin Man witness his own origin when he gets flung back in time. ... In November, Samson Comics will release the first issue of *Bloodbath*, a new ongoing bimonthly title. ... If you're crazy for *Bacchus*, you'll go nuts for Eddie Campbell's first trade paperback collection of his popular series. The 96-page *Immortality Isn't Forever* TPB, collecting issues #1-#4, ships in December, which is when issue #8 also comes out. Other TPBs will follow, to help new readers jump onto the title. ... Hall of Heroes brings a new form of horror to comics with *Snowman #1*. Matthew Martin's story of a horrible monster who terrorizes a small town begins in December, and the first issue has a variant cover by *Cybertrog* artist Ethan Van Sciver. ... A dynamic new high-tech western comic hits stores in December in the form of *Cyber City West*, Saga Productions Inc.'s first ongoing title. The bimonthly book, starring two mercs in a future Los Angeles, will feature computer coloring.

DAWN OF A NEW AGE!

THE PRIZE PART II

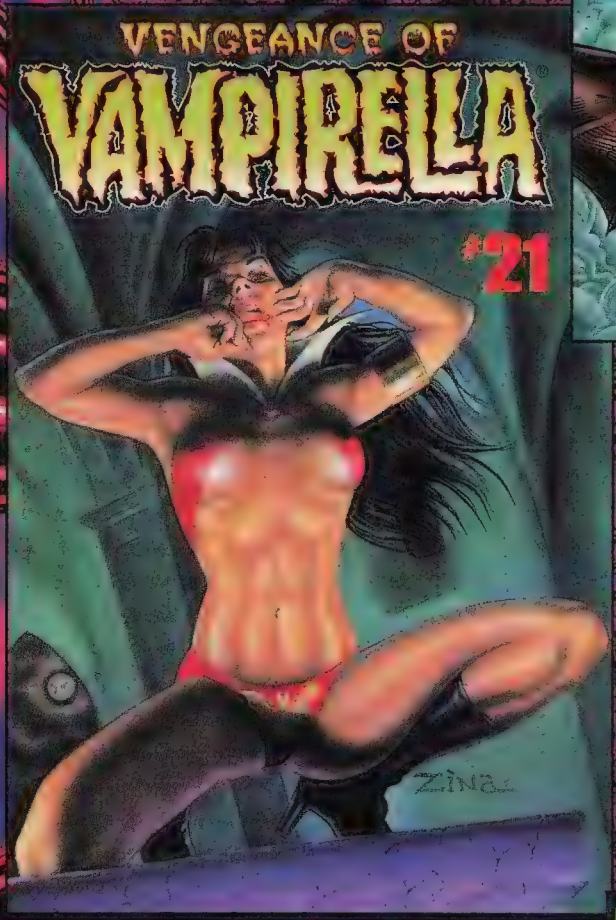
Vampirella teams up with the silvery avenger, Passion, to prevent the corrupt Dante Corporation from kidnapping an infant teleporter while battling the last surviving Slash-demons from expanding a passageway to our dimension.

Sniegoski
McGuinness
Massengill

Cover by **Mike Deodato**

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: An exclusive limited edition long form "Vampirella Gallery" promo card from the Topps set on sale this month!

Full Color, 32 pgs. $2.95 US; $4.05 CANADA

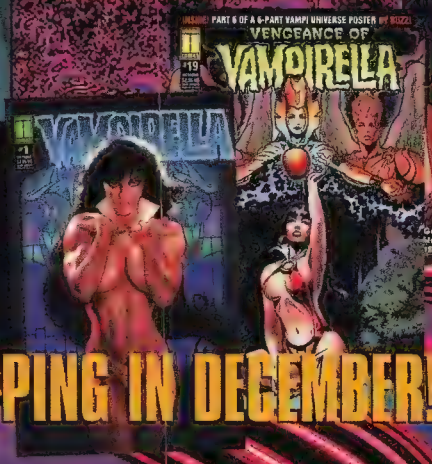


A TROLL'S TALE

Vampirella's origin has come to an end. Now the dread future begins to unfold in a tale that unites the past and the future.

Sniegoski
McGuinness
Massengill

Painted Cover by **Tim Saunders**



Ask your comic store to order these exclusive signed and numbered editions from **HARRIS COMICS** & **DYNAMIC FORCES!**

Vampirella Pin-Up Special #1 signed by Adam Hughes

Vengeance of Vampirella #14-19. (The Mystery Walk) set signed by Chris Berkeley

Rook #1 & 2 set signed by Mike Mignola

SHIPPING IN DECEMBER!

HARRIS COMICS

Vachss' Cross Appears Prior to Book Publication

In an agreement which editor Randy Stradley termed "unique," a new series of novels co-written by noted crime writer Andrew Vachss and novelist James Colbert will be published by Dark Horse Comics prior to appearing in book form.

Vachss, who specializes in issues of child abuse in our society in both his crime novels and his legal practice, is best known to comic fans for the anthology titles *Hard Looks* and *Another Chance to Get it Right*. He recently wrote a Batman novel, *Batman: The Ultimate Evil*, to be published by Warner Books in October.

The new project will debut with a seven-issue mini-series, *Cross*, adapting the first novel in the saga, *Cross: Genesis*. *Cross* #0 ships October 24. Science-fiction and mystery writer Chet Williamson will script, with art by Shannon Londin-Gallant and Marty Sheldon. Geof Darrow (*Hard Boiled*, *The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot*) designed all the characters and is doing covers for each issue.

Cross, the protagonist of the series, is a hardened survivor of the juvenile justice system, feared and respected in the dark world which he inhabits. Vachss said, "He may in fact be the first real mercenary to ever appear in comics. He and his associates are disenfranchised people who went through bad times as children and became bad people as a result. We are not talking about heroes here. They have their own code of conduct and their own sense of how to live their lives." ■ *Jack Curtin*

WHAT? ME WORRY ABOUT AN AUCTION?

Thirty years of satire and parody will go on the auction block October 20, when Sotheby's New York hosts "Mad about *MAD*," an auction of original art from the pages of the magazine, dated from 1966 through 1992.

A major highlight of the auction is *all* the artwork to a single issue of *MAD* #175 (June 1975)—42 pieces in all, including Al Jaffee's Fold-In page, Angelo Torres' parody of TV detectives, "Barnacle Groans," Mort Drucker's look at musical compilation movies, "What's Entertainment," and Jack Davis' "*MAD*'s College Football Coach of the Year." Sotheby's expects this collection to go for $4,000 to $7,000.

A wide range of *MAD* covers will also be bid on, including paintings by the magazine's premier cover artist of the 1960s and '70s, Norman Mingo, as well as the work of his predecessor, renowned science-fiction illustrator Kelly Freas.

Among the other features to be auctioned are the Drucker-illustrated parody "Star Blecch III," Davis' "*MAD* Look at Sports Interviews," and a bunch of Sergio Aragonés' "Mad Look at..." features including "Disney World," and "Star Wars."

Outside the art area, there's one other major artifact from *MAD* that is certain to attract spirited bidding: the desk of *MAD*'s publisher, the late Bill Gaines, presented intact with food stains, original scribblings and random *MAD* publication information. The desk is expected to go for $700 to $1,000. ■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill*

Bisley Aids Radical's Intro of Comics and Video Games

Simon Bisley is helping to kick off a new comics line by Radical Entertainment, a Vancouver-based software-development company. It plans to release a four-part mini-series in October and an ongoing title in January, with video games based on the series to follow in the fall of 1997.

The four-part mini-series, called *The Innocents*, will continue the story of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. Bisley will paint the first cover and contribute a four-page back-up feature. Following covers will be by Liam Sharp, Glenn Fabry and Tony Harris. Created by Rory Armes, Radical's v.p. of development, the comic's lead feature will be drawn by Philip Tse, a Radical animator.

"Comics give us the ability to bring a synergy of talents to the market," explained Ian Wilkinson, president. The firm opened in 1991 creating video games based on existing licenses, which it would then deliver to a marketing company, such as Sony, Sega, Nintendo, 3DO or Apple. Now, it is creating its own characters and bringing them to comics. Those that are hits will have games created afterward.

Also in the works is an ongoing series called *Shadow Wolf*, which is expected to debut in January. It focuses on a lone character who becomes a hero-vigilante, helping a large city's citizens win out over the town's evil, said Armes. "We think it will counter all the 'no-hope' comics that are out there," he said. No creators had been signed by press time.

The company also has approached several co-producers about creating a Saturday morning cartoon show based on its characters, as well as toy manufacturers. "We don't create a generic property and mass-merchandise it," Wilkinson explained. "We intend to tailor each property to fit the medium under consideration. We're getting a strong response from people we've talked to so far." ■ *Craig Shutt*

It's a Bird, It's a Plane— It's a $65G Typewriter!

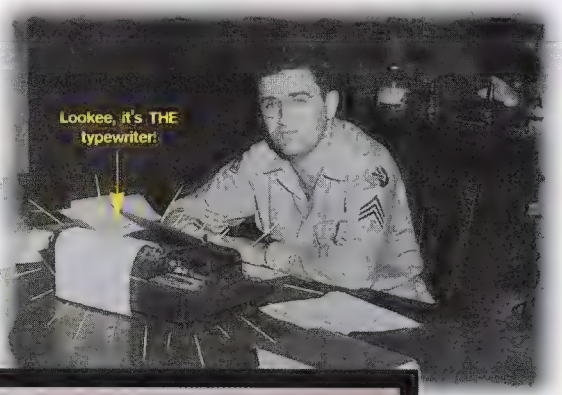
It's a piece of comic book history, but it's not a comic book or even a page of original artwork.

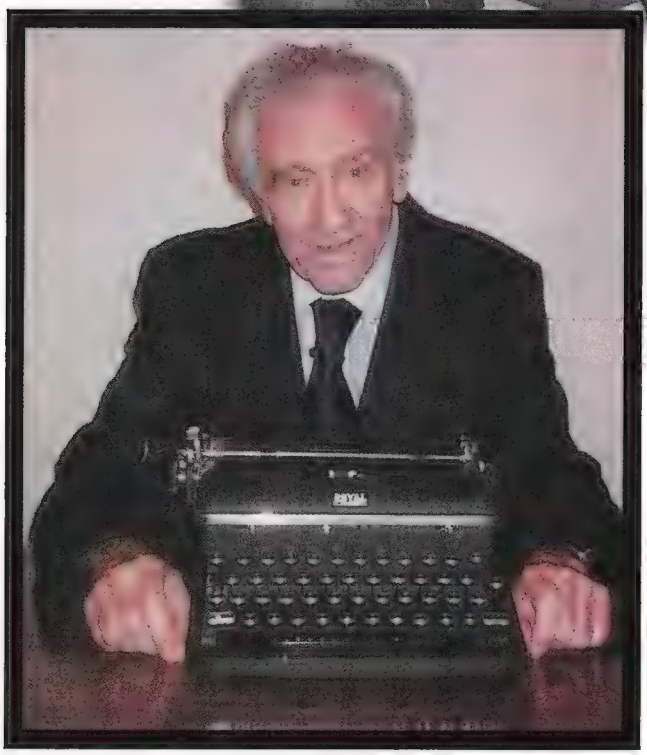
It's a typewriter—reportedly the most expensive typewriter ever offered for sale.

Specifically, it's the typewriter Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel used to turn out many of the scripts for the earliest adventures of the Man of Steel. Siegel traveled with the 1938 or '39 Royal portable, banging out scripts on trips from Cleveland to New York and back. "I'd hastily pack my overnight bag and rush for the train with my portable typewriter in one hand and my overnight bag in the other," Siegel recalled. Neither rocking trains nor other passengers deterred Siegel in his efforts for truth, justice and the American Way, though he often wondered "if the typing noise bothered people nearby."

The typewriter is being offered for sale through Pacific Comic Exchange, which has set the price at $65,000, more than 10 times the current record holder for typewriters—an 1886 machine auctioned at Sotheby's in 1980. That may not be the final price, however, according to PCE president Robert Roter. "It's like putting your house on the market—it's negotiable; there may be competitive bidding," he told *Wizard*, adding that it may be some time before the machine is actually sold. "We just started marketing the typewriter. It will probably take some additional advertising to find prospective buyers."

■ *Patrick Daniel O'Neill* W





Let's Be Blunt.
Snootchie Bootchies
Phone.
Eargasm.
Get High.
Win.
Call the
Mallrats/TouchTunes℠
Sweepstakes Hotline.
Hear "bootchie" sounds
on the Mallrats CD.
AIRWALK FOOTWEAR
or a Mallrats CD or
T-shirt is yours free
if you win.
oh-so-easy instructions:
Call 1-212-695-TUNE and enter code
№251. Press №5 to repeat a tune,
№6 to skip to the next tune,
and №8 to enter the sweepstakes.
Hear bitchin' tunes by
Bush, Weezer, Sponge, Elastica, Wax,
Belly, Girls Against Boys, All, Archers
of Loaf, Thrush Hermit,
The Goops, Squirtgun, and Sublime.
510
MCA SOUNDTRACKS
AIRWALK FOOTWEAR
Mallrats
Get Malled October 20th
No purchase necessary. Sweepstakes runs 9/18/95-12/18/95, is open to US residents (except Puerto Rico) and subject to full rules. Winners announced 1/30/96. Airwalk Footwear (50) arv $55; CD (100) arv $15; T-shirt (75) arv $10. Odds of winning depend on # of entries. For full rules/mail-in entry details, send self-addressed envelope to M/R RULES, PO 56436, Sherman Oaks, CA 91413. Void where prohibited. /Long-distance charges: $0.28 or less per minute* - free in New York City. *excluding calls from Alaska & Hawaii. Minors under 18 must obtain parents' permission before calling.
GRAMERCY

QUIET on the SET

AS THE "X-MEN" CARTOON WINDS DOWN, THE VOICES BEHIND THE MUTANTS HAVE THEIR FINAL SAY

By Rob Allstetter

"X-Mansion."

The voice answering the telephone belongs to Sidney Iwanter, one of the few voices you wouldn't recognize in his immediate vicinity. He's in Studio 4 at Sounds Interchange in Toronto—nicknamed the X-Mansion these mid-August days—for what will probably be the final vocal recording sessions for the "X-Men" animated series.

These are episodes Nos. 68, 69 and 70, a two-parter called "Storm Front" and another episode called "Bloodlines," both set to air sometime early next year. They'll complete the order the FOX Network had for the mega-popular series, now starting its fourth season on Saturday mornings and its first as a weekday afternoon show.

Iwanter—who is the FOX liaison—along with executive producer Joe Calamari, producer Frank Squillace, voice director Dan Hennessey, several Canadian actors and actresses and a pair of technicians are gathered to record some 600 lines in two and a half days.

The pace is intense, but there's a level of fun to the activity. Cal Dodd, the voice of Wolverine, breaks everyone up, reading his line in an Elmer Fudd voice.

"People were crying, they were laughing so hard," says Calamari. "The actors lighten the tension because they're so extroverted."

The laughs came easy for Calamari, but he's also often put in the most confrontational positions during these sessions. He and Iwanter literally come to words over the show's content.

"The intense stuff is between myself and the network person," Calamari says. "We'll fight over words. Earlier today, we fought over two words that were dropped out. I didn't think they should have been dropped."

"I don't let the actors listen to any of that," says Dan Hennessey, who always tries to keep the energy up during recording. "I take the discussion going on and distill it down to a sentence or two for the actors.

"I'm never negative critical. I'm always positive critical."

Frank Squillace—who was brought in on "X-Men" as an assistant to producer Larry Houston with the second season and then took Houston's place for the last 15

Alison Sealy-Smith and Wayne Best record an encounter between Storm and Arkon.

episodes—is a relative newcomer to these sessions, flying in from Graz Entertainment, the show's Southern California production house. He drew sketches of the characters and then gave them to the corresponding performers as a thank you.

"I give them so much credit, so much more than they've been getting," he says. "Yes, you can have great artwork and great animation, but they are the ones who really breathe life into the show."

Cal Dodd, the voice of Wolverine, goes over his lines one last time.

PHOTOS BY CARLO R. ALLEGRI

"More intensity! Make it bigger! Stretch that yell out!"

Hennessey is directing these last episodes, as he has every "X-Men" episode. He has worked on cartoons as both a director and actor for 15 years, and is renowned in the small farming village of Cannington, Ontario—his hometown—as the voice of Braveheart Lion from "The Care Bears."

His vast TV animation experience includes "Beetlejuice," "WildC.A.T.s" and the upcoming "Ace Ventura, Pet Detective." "X-Men" was the first time Hennessey dealt in the superhero genre, though.

"When Winston Richard [an original executive producer] called me and said, 'We have this property called 'X-Men' from Marvel Comics,' I had never heard of it, and was not familiar with the 30-year history," Hennessey says. "I quickly found out. I went to the big comics store in Toronto, The Silver Snail, and started buying all of the X-Men stuff I could find.

"I really like the episodes that deal with the meat of the X-Men, the need to break down the barriers of prejudice."

Hennessey recalls how the first episode of "X-Men" was actually recorded in its entirety three different times.

"I helped set up the original core cast," he says of the show's beginnings. "The auditions for the core cast went two or three weeks, and we must have auditioned 300 people to find exactly the right ones.

"There was a lot of corporate concern for the interpretation of the voices. It was painful for the cast at first. Then we found our style and away we went."

Certainly, the wide variety of backgrounds of the X-characters made for interesting casting. Take Gambit, for example.

"Gambit has this Cajun color to his voice and also a sexy, romantic level," Hennessey says. "We had actual Cajuns come in to audition, but their Cajun was so thick, you couldn't understand them.

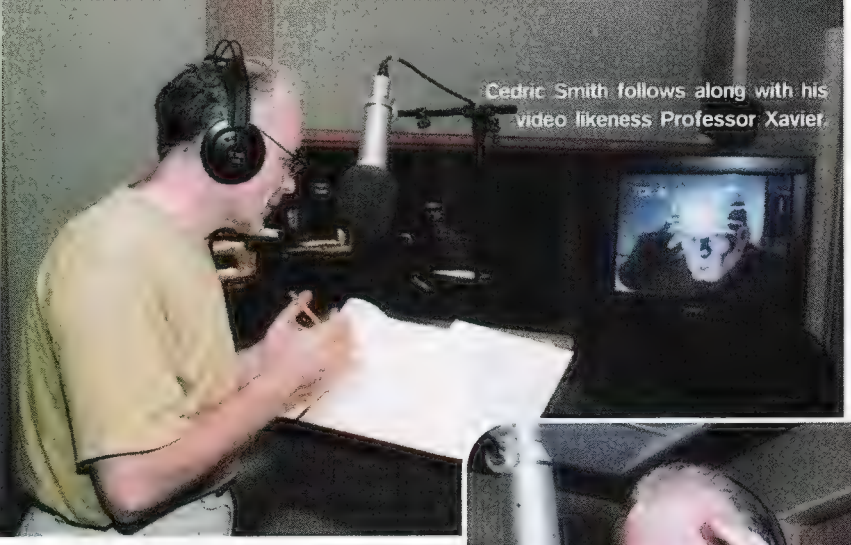
"We had to back off that, and still sound authentic. Chris Potter, who plays the son on the new 'Kung Fu' series, does the voice. He just nails it."

Hennessey is very familiar with the X-Men now. And so are his performers.

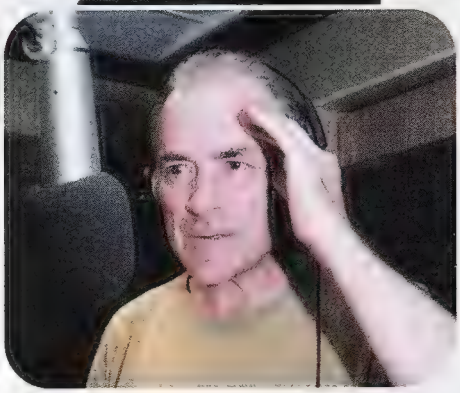
"These people have been living these characters a long time now," says Hennessey. "They know what's right or wrong and we'll drop lines if we don't feel they're right. We'll change them on the spot."

Wolverine: "If there's one thing I hate, it's walking away from a good fight."

Cal Dodd is a hit at weddings. Kids gather around him, just waiting to hear Wolverine talk.



Cedric Smith follows along with his video likeness Professor Xavier.



"These kids are five or six years old and they ask, 'Where do your claws come out?' and 'How come you don't have your suit on?'" Dodd says, chuckling. "I say [switching to Wolverine voice], 'Get lost, punk.'"

Dodd says Wolverine's voice is "a mix of Tom Waits on the musical side and Clint Eastwood." The musical side is important; Dodd toured with Joe Cocker in the 1970s and is Canada's pre-eminent commercial jingle singer.

Wolverine was Dodd's first foray into animation and his first experience with the X-Men phenomenon.

"He doesn't care a lot about authority," Dodd says about the ol' Canucklehead. "He likes to go his own way. He just listens to himself, which is a lot like me. I really identify with him.

"He's the only Canadian on the X-Men. The writers are all Americans and they keep writing 'huh' in the script. Canadians don't say 'huh,' they say, 'eh.' I'm not a writer, but they let me make changes in the lines. I really become him."

In "Storm Front," Wolverine has a hunch the relationship between Arkon and Storm won't work out, and, as usual, isn't afraid to add an opinion to the situation as only he can. "Somethin' ain't right about this place," Dodd growls with his best Logan intonations. "I can smell it."

"He's the most popular, maybe because he takes no crap from anybody," Hennessey remarks. "And Cal's got just a great voice."

It seemed appropriate that after his final lines, Dodd went out for a beer with Alyson Court, who does Jubilee's voice.

"It's kinda sad it's over. I can't imagine him not being in my life," Dodd says. "I think what should happen now should be just like in the comics. Wolverine got his own comic and now he should get his own cartoon. That would be great."

Storm: "For the first time in my life, I am truly happy!"

"We finally get to see a softer side of Storm," says Alison Sealy-Smith of the "Storm Front" episodes, in which her character falls in love with Arkon, the leader of the planet Polemachus, and plans to marry him. "After three years of not letting the emotions go, we get to see her vulnerability."

Sealy-Smith was not the original voice of Storm, although she's redubbed the episodes she originally didn't appear on.

"I originally found Storm stilted," she says. "But as I started to understand the character, it was her extreme control over herself and her powers [that intrigued me]."

Sealy-Smith, of Barbados descent, spent three years on the popular Canadian drama "Street Legal" and currently performs Shakespeare in Stratford, Ontario.

"I have a big voice, and very seldom in the studio atmosphere have I been given full reign," she notes. "I love the bigness, the largesse, the theatricality of her. Those are things she has in common with Shakespeare, slightly removed from reality."

There's also tragedy in the heroine's life. As you might guess, a smooth trip down the aisle is not in store for Storm and Arkon.

"These are my favorite episodes," Sealy-Smith says. "She gets to do everything. Storm's a queen, she's regal, but she also shows vulnerability and an emotional side. These episodes are the most well-rounded for her."

Rogue: "Ha, girl, that's 'bout as likely as Nightcrawler and me bein' kin."

Lenore Zann calls it "that crack." It's that scratchy aspect to her voice so recognizable in her character, Rogue.

"People see me in an elevator and they hear me talk, and they say, 'Sorry, you've got a cold,'" Zann says, laughing. "I just tell them it's my million-dollar voice."

Zann nearly didn't get the role of Rogue. She didn't feel well and almost didn't go to the auditions. But she did go, and as soon as she started talking, the role was hers.

"I really relate to her. She touches people's hearts," Zann says. "I love 'X-Men' and what it says to kids: It's OK to be different. There's a lot of prejudice in the world and if we can help people deal with it, that's great."

A Meg Ryan lookalike with Hollywood aspirations, Zann used her sexiness to play Marilyn Monroe in an off-Broadway rock musical, the first of several historical blondes she's portrayed. Her favorite episode of "X-Men" was "Rogue's Tale," which delved into the character's origin, and she is also fond of the in-progress "Bloodlines," which involves the relationships of Rogue, Nightcrawler, Mystique and Sabretooth.

"All of us love our characters," Zann says. "We can all relate to them in some way or another."

Jean Grey: "Let it go, Scott, I just want to go home."

Catherine Disher, a.k.a. Jean Grey, might

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Don Francks really gets into his role of Sabretooth.

be another X-Men voice, like Potter, that United States viewers would recognize by face. She also goes before the camera in "Forever Knight," the live-action syndicated series about a vampire.

"I play the ironic pathologist, Natalie Lambert," she says. "I seem to end up connecting with a lot of these fantasy things."

Disher, who also does the voice of Topaz on the new syndicated "UltraForce" series, takes the fantastic in stride, though. She admits to being "not conversant" in X-Men lore when the series started, and her favorite episode is the one where she got to do voices of frightened Eskimos in the background. She also enjoyed shifting to a German accent for a role in a Nightcrawler episode.

"She's very, very flexible," Hennessey says. "She can do just about any age range or character point of view."

Disher's Jean Grey character was the focus for a bulk of the third season of "X-Men" during the Phoenix and the Dark Phoenix sagas. Disher did some—but not all—of the Phoenix voices.

"I enjoyed the last of the Phoenix episodes, when I went up into the sun and burned myself up," she says. "The writers made some very nice speeches in that one."

While Jean Grey and Scott Summers are married in the comics, their relationship remains a bit unresolved on the show. You'll recall that a morphed Morph "wedded" the pair in season two, and, after the Phoenix episodes, Jean's more in the background for the fourth season.

"She's very altruistic," Disher says of her character. "But there's something about Logan. Those claws! That hair! Mmmmm..."

Jubilee: "Yeah, we've tangled with just about every jerk around."

"It feels great," says Alyson Court, a.k.a. Jubilee, of her experience on "X-Men." "I don't know of one person who doesn't watch 'X-Men'—no matter what age. I know some adults that are very reserved, and when they found out [I played Jubilee], they went crazy talking about the show."

Jubilee was brought into the TV series to give younger viewers a more identifiable character. After being central to the program's very first two episodes, Jubilee has spent a lot of time on the sidelines, although she'll have a shining moment or two in the fourth season.

"She's a brat," Court says. "Now and then, she's been developed, given a little more to do. She has an edge to her, a nice change of pace from those characters who are more stereotypical for superheroes.

"She doesn't get all that altruistic. She says, 'Let's get real. Let's go get a Big Mac and a shake.'"

"I've known her since she was 10 and she's 21 now," Hennessey says of Court. "She has this real baby face. She's going off to audition to play a 15-year-old, and she can pull it off. She doesn't have a wrinkle on her face. She's bubbly and perky and doesn't have to put it on because that's the way she really is."

Court isn't quite as perky about her show's probable closure.

"It's a sad feeling," she says. About to elaborate, she's called off to work on a scene.

"Sorry, gotta go!"

Sounded just like Jubilee.

"Noooooo!"

With that line, the 70th episode of "X-Men" ends. It may also be the reaction of viewers to the conclusion of more than three years of non-stop production. Ratings continue to soar, rivaled last year only by "Spider-Man"—a show the X-Men will appear on this fall. But 70 episodes are enough to broadcast daily and eventually go into syndication.

"'X-Men' has had an impact," producer Squillace says. "All other multi-character shows are compared to 'X-Men.' They all use 'X-Men' as the measuring stick for action/adventure shows."

Most agree the show improved as it went on, especially those involved early on.

"The tendency in the first two seasons was to try to get everybody in every episode," says Marty Isenberg, who, with partner Robert Skir, wrote five of the 70 episodes. "When I got to 'Savage Land, Savage Heart,' I said, 'Five X-Men. No more. No less.'

"The producers seemed to get it that a smaller cast worked best. You can work on the characters that way."

No one involved with 'X-Men' totally wrote off the possibility of more episodes. There have also been rumors of a "solo" X-Men show that would spotlight a single character at a time, or perhaps another X-team moving to animation.

But the overriding sentimentality is for "X-Men" to go beyond 70 episodes.

"'X-Men' is still doing very well," says Will Meugniot, a producer who worked on the first season and then returned to Graz, and is helping oversee the last. "It's very complicated business-wise to order more. But, at the same time, there are a lot of people with a vested interest."

"I'll be doing post-production work until December or January," Squillace says, which means we'll probably be seeing episodes 68 through 70 a few months into 1996. "After that, who knows?"

"I would hope fans would say, 'Wait a minute, we don't want to watch reruns from now on,' and write the FOX Network," says Zann, Rogue's alter ego, while making plans for the wrap party. "The way the last episode ended, I think there's room for more."

Rob Allstetter, a contributor to "Wizard News" and "Trailer Park," wants to know where he can get a good turkey sammich.

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STRIKE A POSE

WIZARD TAKES YOU BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE *AVENGELYNE SWIMSUIT EDITION* PHOTO SHOOT

By Marc Shapiro · Photos By Robert Beck

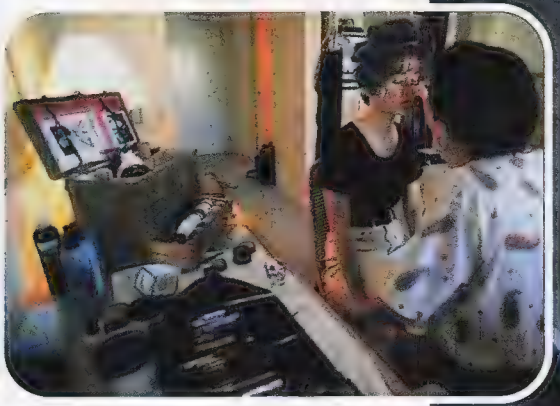
Strutting her stuff in sexy swimwear, sporting a warrior do and swinging her broad sword on the grounds of All Saints Church in Pasadena, Calif. That was the flesh-and-blood vision of Avengelyne the folks at Maximum Press took to the streets for a 24-hour photo workout late in July. And the response from the public came as no surprise.

"A lot of guys came by and were howling and honking their horns," chuckles Image Comics publisher Tony Lobito at the response his wife Cathy Christian, the real-life embodiment/inspiration of Avengelyne, got from the rabid masses."The parishioners from the church also got a little upset."

The purpose of the photo shoot, which crammed three locations and little sleep into a strenuous session ramrodded by

Photographing gorgeous swimsuit models is not all fun and games...

The many faces, and poses of Avengelyne model Cathy Christian



photographer Kelly Sims, was to gather evidence for the *Avengelyne Photo Swimsuit Edition* (which will also feature the contributions of several top comic book artists) and the Avengelyne Calendar, both of which shipped in August. The goal of the shoot was to replicate a number of shots from the comic book (including a live take on the cover to *Avengelyne* #1) and, recalls Christian, it was survival of the fittest all the way.

"We got up at 5 a.m. and drove to Pasadena. I spent two and a half hours in makeup. Then we shot in front of the church and drove to Laguna Beach, where we shot until 8 p.m. Then we drove to Palm Springs, got to bed at midnight, got up at three in the morning and shot again."

Christian relates that it wasn't hard to fit the part while shooting in the surf and on the hot desert sands. "I just had to think like a superheroine. Then all I had to do was pose and swing the sword. This character is based around me, so it's not like I have to act. Hell, most of the time all I have to do is go to conventions and sign things," she laughs.

She recalls that the logistics of the shoot put a premium on modesty. "Finding a place to change was tough, especially in the desert and on the beach. It was basically find a blanket or duck

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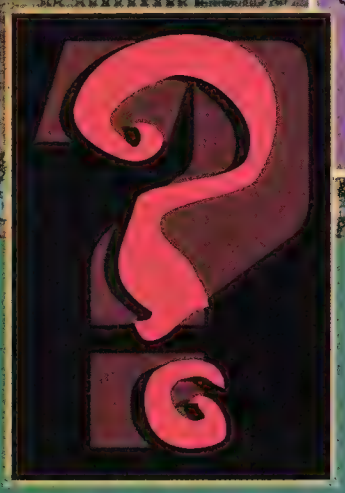

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behind a rock."

The desert shots, in particular, required Christian to double her duties. "We were shooting on the sand and could not have any footsteps showing up in the shots. So I ended up having to do my own hair and basically having to do minor hair and makeup corrections by myself."

Fifty rolls of film later, the Avengelyne shoot came to an end as the sun made its way to its zenith in the California desert. Needless to say, the Image folks were happy with the results. As for Christian?

"All I could think of was, 'Give me my bed,'" she laughs.

Marc Shapiro, who found Avengelyne's swimsuits to be a little tight around his waist, interviewed eight Vertigo writers for Wizard *#49.*

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Body Count

DAVID LAPHAM FINDS PLEASURE IN THE PAINFUL, VIOLENT WORLD OF STRAY BULLETS

"VIOLENCE CAN BE FUN," says David Lapham.

He laughs, because he's explaining his storytelling philosophy for the self-published *Stray Bullets*, and he knows that explanation doesn't quite cut it. After all, lots of superhero stories have violence.

But few superhero readers picking up *Stray Bullets* #1 were prepared for a tale set in 1997 that featured so many people getting blown away. Nor were they ready, in issue #2, for a young girl to react to some schoolroom teasing by stabbing her tormentor in the back with a pencil. Or to see that same kid hitchhiking in issue #4 where she's picked up by an apparent pervert.

Where does all this come from in the former penciler at Valiant and Defiant? The 25-year-old Lapham cites such diverse influences as author Kurt Vonnegut, *Sin City* creator Frank Miller, film directors Alfred Hitchcock and Stanley Kubrick, and movies like *Chinatown* and *Fearless*. "I tend to like anything that has an emotional impact—that really makes you feel something," he says. "A lot of the films I like are violent, because that makes them emotionally charged."

Lapham's never been a major fan of superhero comics, despite his professional background. But he got hooked on comics in the first place with Frank Miller's *Daredevil* in the early '80s. "I was never into fantasy heroes with big powers, but I have a special fondness for his *Daredevil*," he says. "Miller's stuff was superhero comics, but it wasn't. It was real people and real gritty. When he does *Daredevil*, there's something special there. I can never read anybody else's Daredevil." Needless to say, he's also a big fan of *Sin City*. But Miller's a *Stray Bullets* fan as well, which Lapham laughs, "is kinda cool."

To some, Lapham's entry into self-publishing may make him an overnight wonder, but his path has certainly had its share of risks. He discounts the chances he took that got him to where he is in the low-key way he talks about most things. He shrugs off the risk of quitting his secure newspaper job to break into comics five years ago. And he downplays the dangers of producing *Stray Bullets* every five weeks just as the comics distribution channel was being shaken up. Besides, he points out, his gambles paid off pretty well.

His entry into self-publishing was thrust upon him when Jim Shooter's Defiant Comics folded its tent in August 1994, leaving Lapham without a job. He had helped found the company, co-creating the flagship book *Warriors of Plasm*. "At the '94 San Diego Comic-Con everything was fine," he says. "And a week later, it was gone."

Fortunately, Lapham had spent the plane ride home from the con to New Jersey writing what eventually became the script for *Stray Bullets* #1. "I'd been wanting to do my own stuff for a while, but I was so wrapped up in working with Defiant," he explains. "I felt a responsibility to turn it around and make it a stronger company, and then maybe do my own stuff later on. But I was getting artistic pangs to do something different."

When Defiant shut down, Lapham took a hard look at the future. "I saw Defiant's closing as an opportunity instead of a tragedy," he says. "Rather than immediately call people to get a job, I asked myself what I really wanted to do. I thought I had some stories of my own to tell, so I decided to make the story I wrote coming home from San Diego the starting point."

Lapham and his wife Maria were in a strong enough position financially to take the risk. Maria took up the publisher's reins, talking to self-publishers, distributors,

By Craig Shutt

Lapham 1995

retailers and printers about what was needed. She always assisted Lapham with his work, but had planned to become a teacher, he notes. "It was great to have her agree to be the publisher," he says. "Otherwise, I couldn't do it like I'm doing it. It would be much slower. And it's good to have someone who's not working at cross purposes with me."

Maria has been his biggest supporter since before they were married, going back to the days in 1990 when he worked as a layout artist for a daily newspaper in Toms River, N.J. That summer, he and Maria became engaged and set the date for one year later. With her encouragement, Lapham quit his job to devote that year to finding work in comics. "She thought it was the right thing for me to do," he says. "And we figured the least risky time to do it was when I didn't have too many responsibilities."

But as the wedding day approached and only a few responses had trickled in—all rejections—Lapham was getting worried. "She wanted me to keep trying," he admits. "But I had this internal clock that said I had to do it *before* we got married. I knew I'd feel really horrible and that I had responsibilities to uphold."

Late in May 1991, Valiant's Senior Art Director Don Perlin called with an offer. "That was a great day," he laughs, the relief still evident in his voice. He started on a couple of the company's licensed World Wrestling Federation books, then moved over to *Rai* and finally *Harbinger* before helping to create *Shadowman*. He was even touted by Jim Shooter as the second coming of Frank Miller. On top of that, Lapham's work on *Stray Bullets* has often been compared to Miller's own *Sin City*, also a comic with crime stories.

"I think it's flattering," says Lapham. "My book is definitely different than his. I think people compare it initially, and once they read it they don't anymore. And if there can be 80,000 superhero books, there can definitely be a handful of crime books."

Though there aren't many quite like his. *Stray Bullets* #1 took place in the future, while others have taken place in the past, focusing on characters that appear on the periphery of other tales. Issue #6 is the first that has no time period attached to it. "I set the first story in the future to make it clear that I reserved the right to tell any stories I wanted to," he explains. "I wanted to show that I wasn't being held to any set pattern."

More stories will take place in the future, too, with characters weaving in and out. "The characters are going to provide a constant process of coming together and separating," he says. "Some will be seen more often early on, and some will leave and be expanded on later. I want to keep my story outline open and flexible, because I'm continually thinking of things. I don't want to get locked into something so I can't fit a good story into my overall design."

Those plans may include Harry, the so-far unseen catalyst for many of *Stray Bullets*' events. "At some point, I think you'll see Harry," he agrees reluctantly. "I have a story in mind, but I don't know when it will be."

Lapham requires each issue to stand on its own without any previous knowledge needed to understand it. "The most important thing to me is that each issue tells a complete story, forgetting everything else," he says. "Readers who follow everything will have a feeling for the bigger picture, but that won't hurt the enjoyment of any one issue for a new reader."

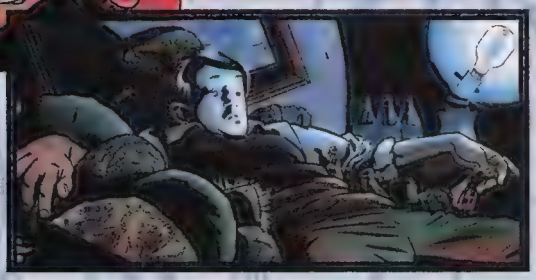
Does he have a massive flow chart worked out pinpointing each character's movements to ensure he won't screw up continuity? "I know all about my characters and where they always are," he laughs. "I'm not going to have 50 books crossing over, so I don't see that as a problem."

Lapham took this approach, he says, because, "I've never been attached to any one character. I want to tell different stories about different kinds of people in different settings, and I didn't want to get stuck trying to do all that with one guy as the focus. My feeling was that I could create all kinds of stories and then link them together. That way it's not just an anthology but a series that people can get deeper into if they want to."

He'd never seen anything like this structure before, but Lapham obviously doesn't shy away from challenges like that. "At the beginning, I worked out what ideas I wanted to talk about and what stories I wanted to tell, and it seemed pretty obvious that I could piece them together while still jumping around to tell whatever story I wanted to tell that month."

Lapham also incorporates an eight-panel layout for each page, which is similar to that of a movie screen. He adds that this format allows him to tell a lot of story each issue. "It's very important to me to express a lot of subtle movements and expressions and things, so I need lots of space."

A fast penciler, Lapham was used to doing *Harbinger* and *Shadowman* simultaneously at Valiant. "I was expecting self-publishing to be tougher than what I'd been doing—



and it is," he laughs. "There are so many elements to work on, and you care about every piece of it so much. You want it to be perfect, so it takes more time. But you only have so much time to spend, so the extra has to come out of other stuff—like sleeping."

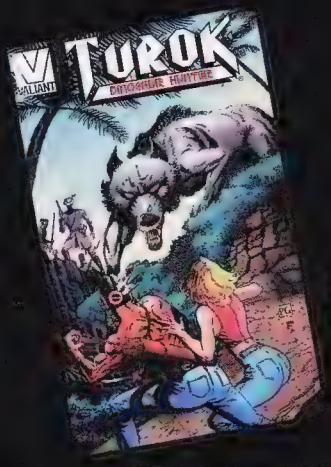
He's got many more *Stray Bullets* stories to tell, he assures readers, but he doesn't intend to do 300 issues a la Dave Sim's *Cerebus*. "I do have other kinds of stories I want to tell some day," he says. "This isn't the project of my life; this is just *one* project in my life."

He intends to keep all of his current stories in print, and he's already reprinted issues #1 and #2. A trade paperback looms on the horizon. "I can't wait to have my own trade paperback; I love them," he admits. "The first seven issues have some closure to them, so that may be a good point to collect it. But right now, I'm trying to focus on telling the best stories I can." W

Craig Shutt, who spent two days with Todd McFarlane for last issue, enjoys life. Even on a cloudy day.

HUNT OR BE HUNTED.

TUROK. IN OCTOBER.



39: THE BADLANDS. TUROK BRINGS ORDER TO AN OUT-OF-TIME FRONTIER. THE ADVENTURES OF AN APACHE DINOSAUR HUNTER ON AN ALIEN WORLD. BY TIMOTHY TRUMAN AND PAUL GULACY.

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Wizard casts the Tick movie!

Casting call

OK, how's this for different? This month, we're casting a movie based on a cartoon that was based on a comic. Pretty risky, you say? Heck, when you've got a great bunch o' characters and some big-name actors, you just can't lose. Besides, the huuuuge success of a certain "funny" comic book movie (hint: it rhymes with *The Mask*) has proven to Hollywood that a humorous live-action comic movie can make the big bucks. So, who would we cast in our version of this insectile flick? Read on...

By a bunch of *Wizard* staffers

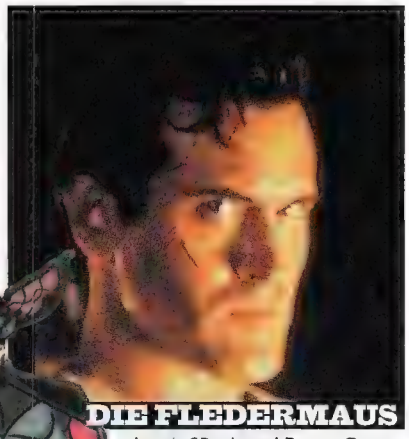
All photos: Everett Collection, unless otherwise noted.

THE TICK

Our big-jawed, naive, "Spoon!"-yellin' hero would be played perfectly to the antenna by John Tesh, co-host of "Entertainment Tonight". Not only does he look and sound the part, but he's pretty goofy too.

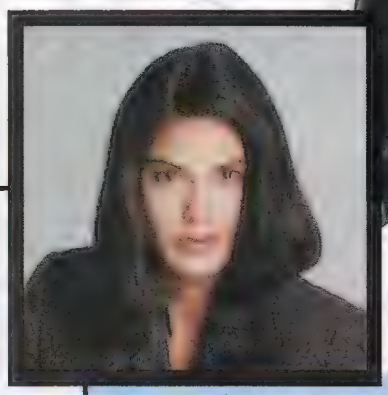
ARTHUR

The Tick's bunny sidekick, er…make that moth sidekick is a perfect role for Rick Moranis to grab. You've seen him play plenty of dopey parts in a number o' movies like *The Flintstones*, *Spaceballs* and *Ghostbusters*.



DIE FLEDERMAUS

Army of Darkness' Bruce Campbell would be clutch as the superhero who loves to avoid trouble at all costs.



AMERICAN MAID

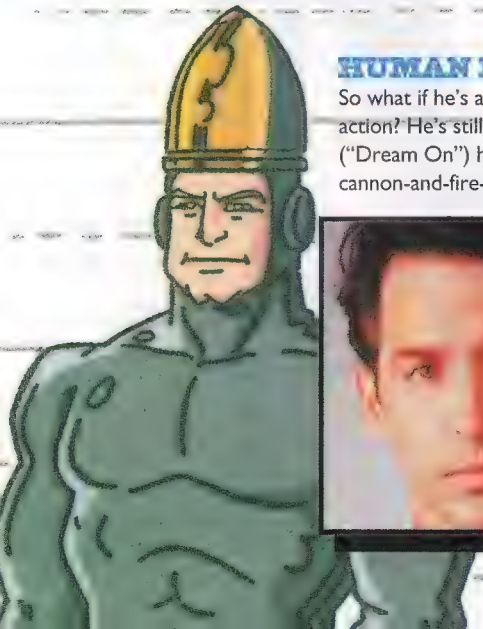
Hell, any time we can throw Teri Hatcher into a movie has *gotta* be a good thing. Besides, the leading lady of "Lois & Clark" bears a striking resemblance to the high heel-throwing superheroine.

DOT

Cynthia Stevenson (*The Player*, *Watch It!*, the TV show "Bob") has the mousy quality to play Arthur's concerned sister.

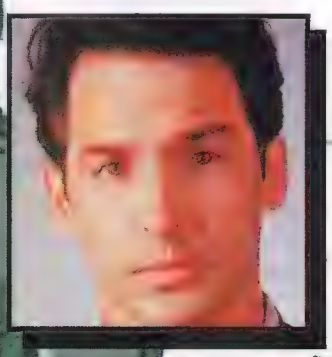
SEWER URCHIN

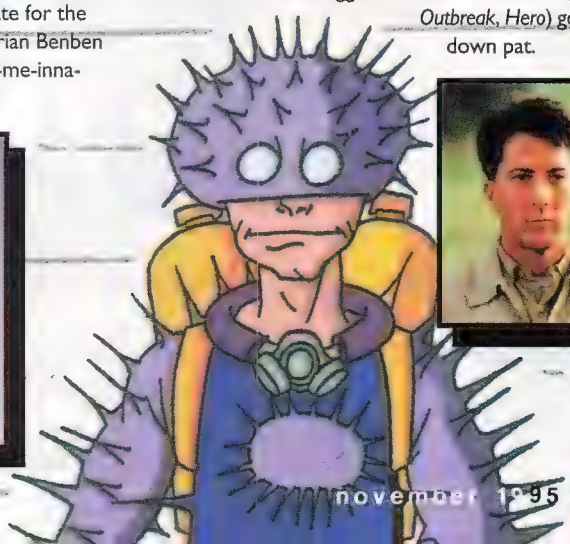
"Yeah. This is definitely bad. Definitely bad." Seein' as how Sewer Urchin is a direct knock-off of Raymond Babbitt from *Rain Man*, we figgered Dustin Hoffman's (*Rain Man*, *Outbreak*, *Hero*) got this one down pat.



HUMAN BULLET

So what if he's always a little late for the action? He's still a hero, and Brian Benben ("Dream On") has the "shove-me-inna-cannon-and-fire-me-off" look.





DINOSAUR NEIL

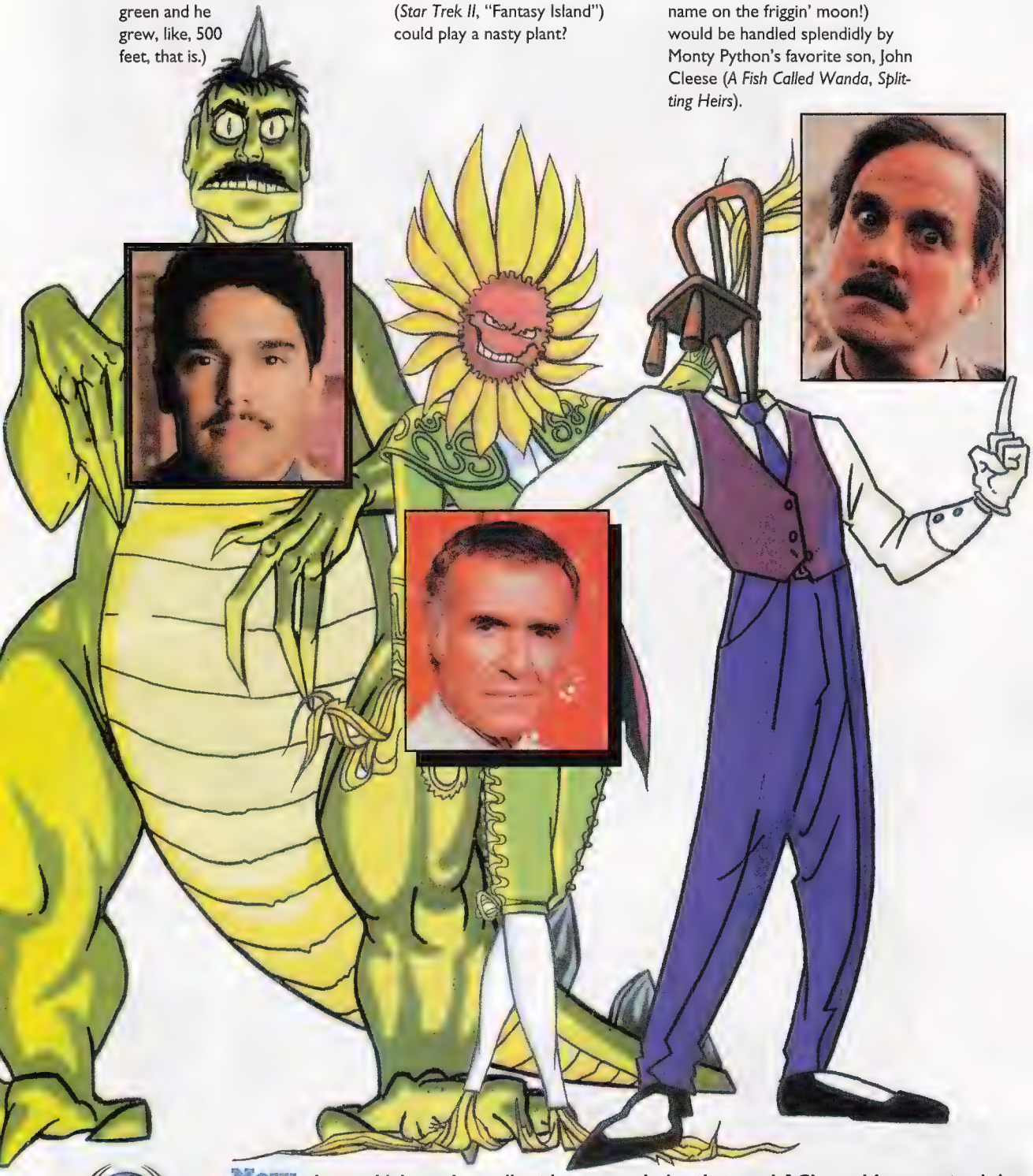
Nick Turturro from "NYPD Blue" would make a pretty convincing Dinosaur Neil. (If we painted 'im green and he grew, like, 500 feet, that is.)

EL SHED

Hmm... Sneaky. Suave. Cool accent. Snappy dresser. Why, who else but Ricardo Montalban (*Star Trek II*, "Fantasy Island") could play a nasty plant?

CHAIRFACE CHIPPENDALE

The baddest bad guy of 'em all (Hey, the guy tried to write his name on the friggin' moon!) would be handled splendidly by Monty Python's favorite son, John Cleese (*A Fish Called Wanda*, *Splitting Heirs*).



NOW who wouldn't crack a smile at least once during that movie? C'mon, it's guaranteed rip-roarin', knee-slappin' fun! And if those Hollywood geeks'd get off their duffs and stop puttin' out crap like that *Operation Dumbo Drop* thing, this movie would have a real fightin' chance! W

Special thanks to Christina Mahotz from Graz Entertainment Inc. for supplying us with The Tick *artwork.*

The Wizard *staff often longs for a day when the moon has the first three letters of Chairface Chippendale's name written on it. (C'mon, it'd be neat!)*

Tall. Lean. Gorgeous.

(OF COURSE, WE MEAN THE CARDS)

TOPPS PRESENTS...

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Topps

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cut here for a choice little poster

FIRST LOOK

WITCHBLADE

Marc Silvestri's newest Bad Girl gets her own ongoing series this October

"Yes, she's got big breasts," says Marc Silvestri as he steps away from his drawing board to admire his latest work in progress: Witchblade. "She's anatomically endowed in the true comic book form, which is usually the way I draw things anyway."

Silvestri, taking a sabbatical from his Image Comics studio's flagship title *Cyberforce*, explains that Witchblade (trumpeting the October release of this latest entry into his Top Cow Universe) is not another munchie out of the Bad Girl cookie cutter.

"We wanted to give Witchblade a more gothic and less high-tech look," says Silvestri. "You can see there's more of a fantasy element. She wears armor rather than just running around in spandex. There's a lot of detail involved. There's some real work here. It's not like I just drew a naked figure and added some skintight clothing. The glove is kind of gothic driven with an Alienesque feel to it."

You may just recognize that glove and Witchblade herself from last month's *Cyblade/Shi Special: The Battle for Independents*. And now, thanks to writers David Wohl and Brian Haberlin with penciler Michael Turner, you can learn all about the gloved one in her new monthly series.

New York detective Sara Pezzini is investigating a homicide when she's tipped off about a big crime boss meeting. As it turns out, the meeting is more of a competition, as all the guys are trying to wield the power of the glove. With a touch of the Arthurian Excalibur legend to it, only one person each generation is truly worthy to wear it. As it turns out, Sara is this generation's chosen one and ends up with the glove. When she chooses to use it for good, however, she quickly learns that things aren't quite that simple, especially when the glove starts having conversations with her. And good is far from the first thing on its agenda.

Silvestri describes the *Witchblade* story as "a kind of perverted buddy concept."

"She unwillingly inherits the glove and slowly but surely becomes addicted to its power. Witchblade discovers that, in a sense, she's made a deal with the Devil. The glove gives her power to do heroic things but demands certain things from her in return."

And just what was Silvestri thinking when he created this righteous Bad Girl? "It's simple" he says, "I wanted to try something different." W

Marc Shapiro, who wrote "We Knew 'Em When" last issue, is often caught talking to his underwear.

BY MARC SHAPIRO

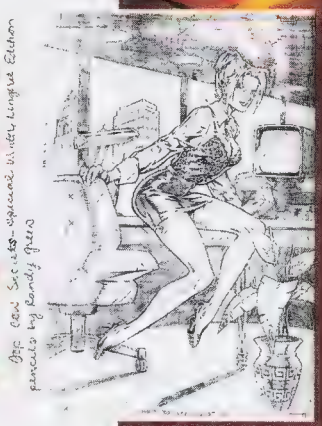
VITAL STATS

WHO:
Witchblade

WHAT:
Top Cow Productions' new Bad Girl created by Marc Silvestri

DEBUT:
Cyblade/Shi Special—The Battle for Independents, September 1995

WHAT'S HER DEAL:
A female detective finds a powerful glove that gives her superhero-like powers. She attempts to use its power for good, but quickly learns that the glove has a mind of its own, as well as an affection for evil. What's worse, it doesn't mind telling her that!



How come the cops in our force don't look like this?

Wizard & Creative License Present:

CONTEST

THE SPIDER-MAN FIGURE CONTEST

Hey, lookee here! The people at Creative License wanted you to have a Spidey on a Wall for your wall! And guess what? You don't have write a 1,000-word essay or do your best Picasso impression to win it. You just have to know how to spell your name and tell us where you live.

This month's contest is sponsored by those nice people at CREATIVE LICENSE

HOW TO PLAY

Just fill out the entry form below and send it to us. Then we take the entries, mix 'em all up and pick a winner. The lucky winner will get one of these great Spidey wall things. Easy enough? So c'mon,what are you waiting for?

THIS IS WHERE WE TELL YOU ABOUT THE PRIZE:

GRAND PRIZE (1):

One reader will get this limited-edition, cool-lookin', Randy Bowen-sculpted, 9"-tall sculpture of Spider-Man. It's cold-casted in porcelain (Ooooh!) and hand-painted (Aaahh!). It even comes with one of those certificates of authenticity you all love so much. Oh, yeah, it has a retail price of $140. (Geez, that's a lot of bucks for knowing how to spell your own name!)

DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 30, 1995!

Legal Mumbo Jumbo

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, Creative License, Marvel, their immediate families and Doe. Who's a deer. A female deer. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Spider-Man Figurine Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winner. No cash equivalent or substitute prize will be offered. Prize is awarded in the name of the contest winner and is not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Ray, a pocketful of sun, me, a name I call myself. **ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED AT CONTEST HEADQUARTERS BY NOVEMBER 30, 1995.** Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winner will be selected randomly by Wizard Press. Drawing will take place on December 15, 1995.

For the winner's name, available after December 15, 1995, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Spider-Man Figurine Contest Winner, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Official Spider-Man Figurine Entry Form

Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____

Just fill this form out, put it in an envelope and send it to: Spider-Man Figurine Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Greg Capullo's

KRASH COURSE

UP WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT!

Hello again, everybody. I hope you've all been practicing like good little boys and girls. Later, we'll be grading you on last month's perspective test. I can hardly wait to see who our future comic gods will be! But before that, we're going to cover another very important element in comics...the establishing shot.

Some of you might ask, "What exactly *is* an establishing shot, Unca Greggy?" Basically, it's a "set-up" panel used to convey important story information to the reader. It establishes the scene or setting the artist is drawing. For me, there are three categories of establishing shots. There's the *general exterior establishing shot*, the *specific exterior establishing shot* and the *interior establishing shot*, which is specific by nature.

1. general exterior shots

A story can take place anywhere. Other countries, outer space, big cities, in the suburbs, etc. You can use a "general exterior shot" to convey those facts. A shot of the Great Pyramids, for instance, would tell the reader your story takes place in Egypt. Just as a shot of the Statue of Liberty says you're in New York City. Draw whatever it is that's closely related to your story's location. It's just like playing word association. City: skyscrapers. Suburbs: family homes. Countryside: farms. Get the idea?

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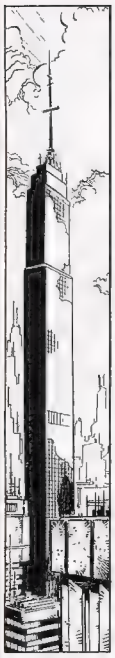
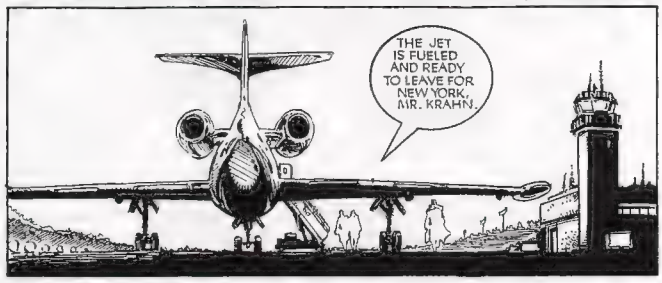
2. specific exterior shots

Let's move on to the "specific exterior shot." This type of shot is used to show the reader *exactly* where the events are unfolding. If your character is on an airplane, show the plane to the reader. Perhaps a specific building is in order, or are your characters in a barn or hospital? Show the readers where the story's taking place by supplying them with a shot of the outside first. Doing this is a very important element in storytelling, especially when changing locations during the story: A new establishing shot is needed in order to say to the reader, "Hey! We're over here now!"

A good thing to note is that exterior shots also allow the reader to breathe once in a while, by bringing him outdoors. It's a nice change of pace after being cramped indoors for a long while.





3. interior shots

Lastly, there's the "interior establishing shot." I have the most fun with this one. You know the game where you pick out the things that don't belong in a picture? Well, this is the opposite. Use as many props as you can think of to make your setting appear convincing to the reader. If your character is in an office, show the types of things that would typically be found there, like filing cabinets, computers, desks and the like. How about a hospital room? You could use monitors, hospital beds, visitors' chairs, etc.

You can also say something about what kind of people your characters are by the props you use. A person who's deeply devoted to religion may have bibles, rosary beads, candles, crosses and statues filling the room. Every picture should tell a story. All of your key elements should be present in the establishing shot. Notice the bulletin board with all the Spawn clippings on it in the example to the left. This is a key element in the story.

4. dirty dishes are key

In another example, we see a family kitchen scene (above) where everything is in disarray. Dirty dishes fill the sink, the cabinets are filthy, food is left out. Now notice some finer points I included in this picture. Like the bottle of booze on the counter behind the abusive father. Also, his gun carelessly left on the kitchen chair, within reach of the kids. Both the booze and the gun were integral parts of the story. Sometimes these key elements need to be included in exterior shots as well.

5. sewers are stinky but fun

. .as with this scene, which establishes a sewer drain in example A. It was important to include it in the first picture, in order for the following panel to be understood. Or the tenement building window in example B, with a man in silhouette holding a phone. This was used as set-up for the following page, where the setting was made clear as we cut to the interior establishing shot. Remember, without a sense of place your story will seem flat, or worse, confusing. Also remember that a great deal of interest can be created through clever use of props.

So don't be among the punks who try to sneak by without using solid establishing shots. "Guys with no background" is what I call 'em. Anyway, I hope I've given you inspiration to make your comics better than the other guys. All of this is important stuff you're learning here in "Krash Course." Remember, there's more to drawing comic books that just musclemen in tights smashin' each others' mugs in! Now. .on to the scoring!

6. didja pass or fail?

If you followed last month's clue, you would've found the ELL (Eye Level Line) to be just under the noses of the standing figures, and this would allow you to uncover the multitude of perspective errors in the drawing.

If you said the buildings were wrong, give yourself 1 point. If you said the filing cabinets and books were out of perspective, give yourself 1 point. If you said the desk, *deduct* 1 point. If you said the seated man, *deduct* 1 point. If you said the ashtray and shot glass, give yourself 3 points. If you noticed the filing cabinets were extremely out of proportion (not just perspective), give yourself 5 bonus points. Tally up your scores to see how well you did.

Score/Ranking

0	**total hack**
1-2	**budding stud**
3-5	**tough guy**
6-9	**McFarlane, move over**
10	**future comic god**

I hope you all did well. But if someone scored zero, don't give up hope yet. Unfortunately, I've seen stuff like this see print. Not that that's something to be proud of. By the way, those of you who won the bonus points will have a head start on the others when I address proportion and scale next time! Till then. .keep the lead burnin', tough guys! **W**

Greg Capullo can be seen doing his fair share of the art on Spawn, *published by Image Comics.*

DRAWING BOARD

Who needs the pros? This is the show for **Wizard Readers' Art**

The eight hard-working people whose artwork scored an honorable mention this month will each receive an *X-Force* #38 signed by Fabian Nicieza and a *Superboy* #0 signed by Tom Grummett. The three solid runners-up will each receive a copy of *The Maxx* #1 signed by Sam Kieth, a *Spider-Man* #51 signed by Tom Lyle and a *Captain America* #425 signed by Mark Gruenwald and Dave Hoover. Giampiero A. Genovese, the highly talented artist of the winning entry this month, will receive all that cool stuff, plus an original piece of Vampirella art by Hearn Cho (thanks tons, guy)! A hearty congrats to all of you!

THE ARTIST

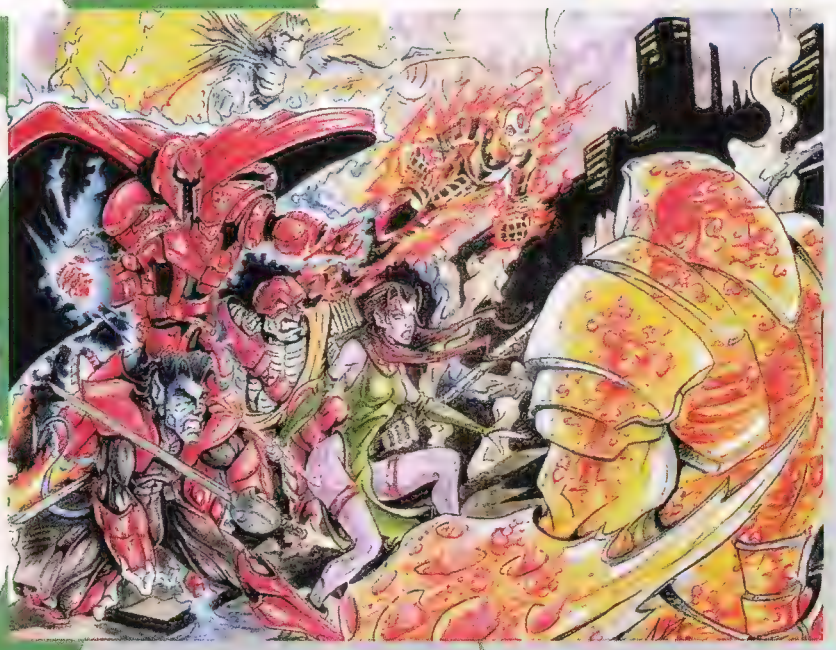
GIAMPIERO A. GENOVESE

THE BOOTY

GRAND PRIZE

SHI Giampiero A. Genovese Lihue, HI

RUNNERS-UP

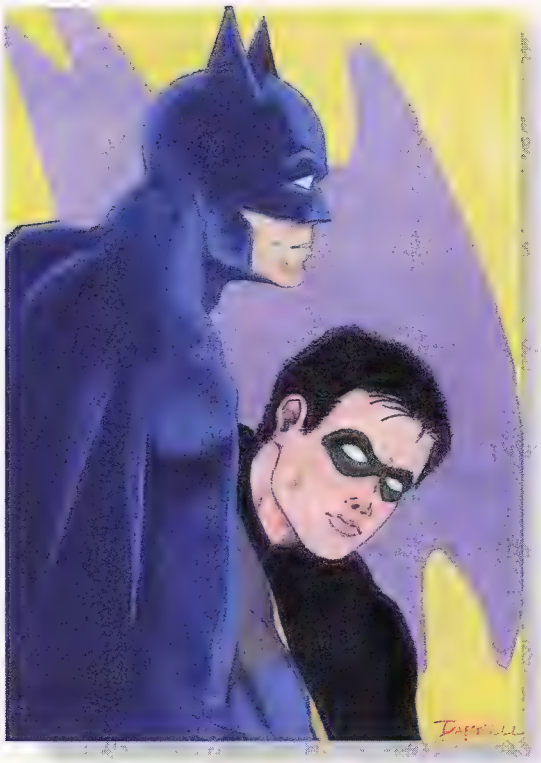


ALTERNATE TIMELINE X-MEN **James P. Wallace** Lowville, NY

GARGOYLE **Dave Gal** Brampton, Ontario, Canada

IS IT REALLY OVER? **Jon Gire** San Diego, CA

HONORABLE MENTION



BATMAN & ROBIN
Darrell Grans
Concord, CA

PSYLOCKE
Rob Piecuch Horseheads, NY &
Chris Riley Trinidad, West Indies

TANK GIRL
Jason R. Peña
Phoenix, AZ

CAPTAIN AMAZING
Scott Kurtz
Lewisville, TX

DRAWING BOARD

HELLBOY & NIGHTCRAWLER
Douglas Ottney
Cambridge, Ontario, Canada

WOLVERINE
Rommel F. Galeos
Paco, Manila, Philippines

THE MAXX
Tony Ganus
Norfolk, VA

CYBER-GAMES
Tony Esteves
Edmonton, Alta., Canada

Want your art to appear on one of these four pages in future issues? Think you've got what it takes? (Hey—quality *and* originality count, y'know.) Then send your Drawing Board entries to:

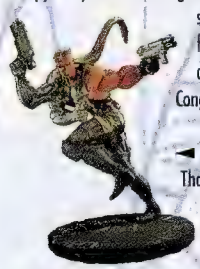
Drawing Board
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Avenue
Congers, NY 10920-2064

And follow these rules or else: Use any form of unlined paper or posterboard (no larger than 8 inches by 11 1/4 inches) and any medium (oils, crayon, mustard, etc.—but not neon inks). Put your name, full address and TELEPHONE NUMBER on the back of your piece, and mail it flat to avoid damage. All entries are nonreturnable and become property of Wizard Press. Employees of Wizard Press are the sole judges of the contests, and all decisions are final. Got it? Good luck!

HOMEMADE HEROES

THE ARENA FOR FAN-MADE ACTION FIGURES.

Believe it or not, the following figures were made out of plain old, ordinary action figures, and every one of the talented creators will receive a Cyberforce toy three-pack and a copy of *Cyberforce #1* signed by Marc Silvestri. The two Runners-Up will get all that cool stuff, *plus* a copy of *Cyberforce #2* signed by that Silvestri fella. The Grand Prize winner runs off with alla that loot plus an awesome Mattel Stryker Polystone statue. Congratulations to everyone!



Thanks very much to the fine folks at Mattel for their generous donation of prizes. You guys are the bestest!

LONE RANGER & TONTO

"ME TIRED OF YOU GETTING ALL CREDIT, KEMOSABE. ME GO DO RUDENESS TO SILVER."

Crafted from Hasbro large-sized G.I. Joe Destro and Flint figures, respectively, The Lone Ranger and Tonto come our way from Leopoldo Oliver of Pasadena, Californ-i-a.

GOLDEN AGE STARMAN

"THEESE...THEESE ES MY ICE CREAM BAR! MINE!"

Shad Miland of Memomonie (say that three times fast), Wis., made Starman from a Toy Biz Gideon.

IRON FIST

"I NEED NO CAPTION. I AM LAME."

The "Fist of K'un-Lun" was made by James Siew of Singapore, Philippines. Iron Fist used to be a Toy Biz Gideon (geez, that figure's kinda popular 'round these parts) with a mask made from a "Blue Tak" set with super glue.

SUPERBOY

"HEY, THESE VALIANT VISION GLASSES ARE COOL! WITH THEM, I CAN SEE THE FUTURE OF VALIANT SALES...UH-OH..."

The Kid was made from some Kenner *Batman: The Animated Series* Robin figure (though we're not sure which one).

WOLVERINE

SECOND PLACE

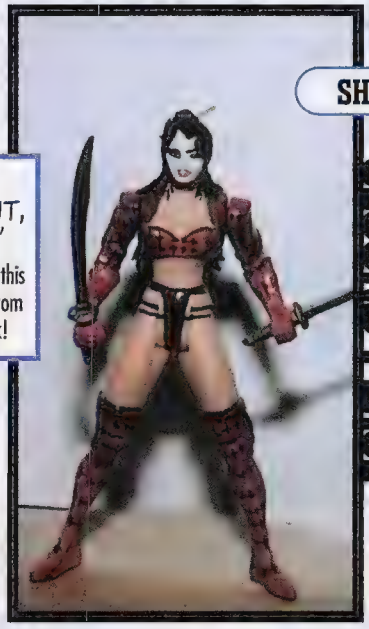
"HEY, HOW DO YOU GET A ONE-HANDED WOLVERINE OUT OF A TREE? WAVE." (HA! US FUNNY.)

Boy, this guy is pretty popular. We get in at least 20 per month. Patrick Payne of Pearland, Texas, made 'im outta a 10-inch Toy Biz Wolverine with lots of putty to fill in all the gaps in the elbows and knees.

"ALL I NEED TO DO IS PRESS THIS BUTTON ON MY BUCKLE AND ALL MY FOES WILL BE BLINDED BY MY BIPPIES!"

Ol' Boomer here was made from a Kenner *Aliens* Ripley figure. A nice job by Rhea Vandarsdall of Lakeland, Fla.

BOOMER



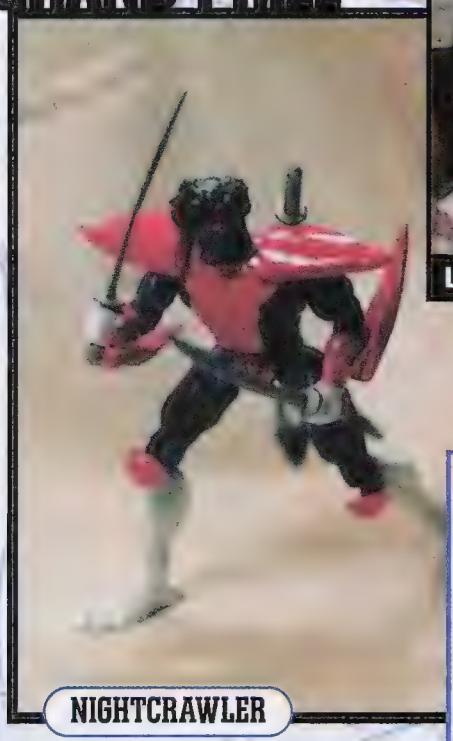
SHI

SECOND PLACE

"I'M NOT ONLY A BIKINI-WAX PRESIDENT, I'M ALSO A CLIENT."

Rick Richards of Burlington, N.C., made this spiffy (can an assassin be spiffy?) Shi from a Toy Biz Rogue Figure. Nice job, Rick!

GRAND PRIZE



NIGHTCRAWLER

THE WINNER

LEWIS J. GREENE II

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Lewis J. Greene II of Oxon Hill, Md., cranked out this "Age of Apocalypse" Nightcrawler figure by using a Toy Biz Trevor Fitzroy head, a Toy Biz Kylun torso, Toy Biz Smythe legs and electrical wire for the tail. Congratulations, Lewis!

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GENE POOL

FOLLOWING THE FOOTSTEPS OF THEIR FAMOUS FATHER, ADAM AND ANDY KUBERT HAVE FOUND THEIR TRUE CALLING

Let's dispel a few misconceptions about Adam and Andy Kubert.

First off, they're not twins. But yes, they are indeed brothers. Adam was born in 1959 in Boonton, N.J., and Andy two-and-a-half years later in that very same town. Second, they're not clones of their famous father, Joe Kubert, even though they both were classmates at his popular school The Joe Kubert School of Cartoon and Graphic Art. Third, they're not mutants, although they both draw highly regarded Marvel Comics mutant books: Adam on *Wolverine* and Andy on *X-Men*. Fourth, both were courted heavily by Acclaim to become part of its "Birthquake" promotion, but decided in favor of exclusive contracts at Marvel. And they couldn't be happier.

ANDY

ADAM

BY PAUL J. GRANT

Andy has been setting the mood of *X-Men* (above and below) for four years.

Adam and Andy Kubert ascended the industry ladder to become two of the most respected pencilers of today. With Joe Kubert as their father, you'd probably assume they were both destined to follow in his footsteps. Well, you'd be wrong.

"There was a lot of doubt in my mind," Adam laughs. "I always knew I wanted to be an artist, but I guess I wanted to find my own niche in that field. When I got out of high school, I went to the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York for medical illustration, because I liked science and I liked art. All through school, though, I was doodling stuff out of my head. Not comic book stuff, but stuff that was more creative than drawing livers and kidneys. After I got out of school, I realized this wasn't what I wanted to do. What I wanted to do was comics. Why fight it? So I went to my dad's school, and I'm glad I did."

Andy also went to R.I.T. for two semesters, studying packaging design, but found it wasn't to his liking. "So I called my dad one time, and he suggested going through his school for a year, and then maybe working in the offices in administration and learning how the school ran. I never thought I would get into comics, but as I went through the first year of school, I got into drawing comics and it just sort of steamrolled from there."

Going Through the Ranks

Both broke into comics professionally as letterers, oddly enough. Adam started lettering at 13, in lieu of a newspaper route, and not because he was enamored of lettering, but just to earn extra money for minibikes and motorcycles. In fact, he was on the TV game show "What's My Line?" as the youngest professional comics letterer. "One of the hardest things to do when you're first breaking in is getting your foot in the door," Adam observes.

Through lettering, the brothers got to know all the editors. They'd bring their pencil work up when they dropped off lettered pages, and eventually attracted enough notice to break out of the lettering pool.

Andy's first penciling job was a back-up story in *Savage Sword of Conan* #114 under editor Larry Hama. He then worked on *Sgt. Rock*, after his father left as editor in the mid-'80s. Adam's first penciling credit was a two-page school assignment that he did as a back-up story for Pacific Comics' *Edge of Chaos* in 1983. He then worked on DC's *Warlord*, Comico's *Jonny Quest* and *Jezebel Jade* in the mid-'80s, and a lot of work for *National Lampoon*.

Then in 1987, DC editor Mike Carlin asked Adam and Andy to draw the *Doc Savage* mini-series together. They alternated on penciling and inking. Adam penciled the first and third issues, and Andy the second and fourth. "We alternated because we both wanted to do it," Adam recalls.

"Plus, we had to get it done," Andy adds. "The deadline on that was murder. We really had to crank it out."

After that, both brothers hit their strides. The pair have since done *Adam Strange* and *Batman vs. Predator*, both for DC. Andy's credits include *The Punisher*, *Ghost Rider*, *X-Factor*, *Avengers* and—at present—*X-Men*. Adam's DC credits include an issue of *Star Trek* and the four-part *My Name is Chaos* with Tom Veitch. As for Marvel, he did *Spirits of Vengeance* and is currently penciling the exploits of the X-Men's toughest mem-

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ber in *Wolverine*.

When the two first started out, some criticized them for being "Joe Kubert clones," but neither see that as a bad thing.

"I would take it as flattery," Adam proclaims. "If I could draw half as well as my dad could, I'd love it. I don't personally think my stuff looks like my dad's, but if other people did, I couldn't care less. You gotta start somewhere, and everybody's influenced by everything, whether it's comic book work or book illustration or whatever. Eventually you'll develop into your own style. I think it's difficult to start off fresh."

Andy is equally as candid: "When I first started out, I was heavily influenced by my dad. It goes with going through school and having him as a teacher, and living with him at home and having him go over my work. He was always critiquing my stuff. He taught me everything, pretty much. So when people used to say—and they still say—'That kind of looks like your dad,' I took it as a compliment."

Working on Mutants

Adam landed the *Wolverine* assignment through some very devious means. "I asked," he says, and both brothers laugh. "It was a character that I really liked and wanted to do. I called *Wolverine* editor Bob Harras and asked him what were the chances of having the opportunity to work on it. After a couple of weeks, he said it was pretty good—when do I want to start?"

Since taking on the book with issue #75 in 1993, Adam says he and *Wolverine* writer Larry Hama have had a great working relationship. "I talk to him two or three times a month, if we have questions or just want to B.S. about stuff. He's a great writer. He provides references for me sometimes, and his stories are really exciting to draw. His plots are really fun to draw from and he leaves a lot of opportunity for me to stretch out. He gives me a lot of freedom, which I enjoy."

In approaching *Wolverine*, Adam had a wealth of prior versions to draw from for inspiration, although there's no one particular artist whose work he used as a template. "I looked at Marc Silvestri, John Buscema and Mark Texeira," he reports. "I think those three guys are my favorite Wolverine artists."

In becoming a "hot" artist on a high-profile book, Adam admits that he altered his style a little bit. "The fans are looking for a certain thing," he explains. "They're looking for a high-impact, dramatic story. I may

At top: The brothers collaborated on *Batman vs. Predator*, with Adam inking over Andy's pencils.
At left: Adam handles *Spirits of Vengeance*.

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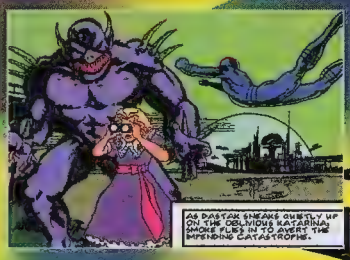

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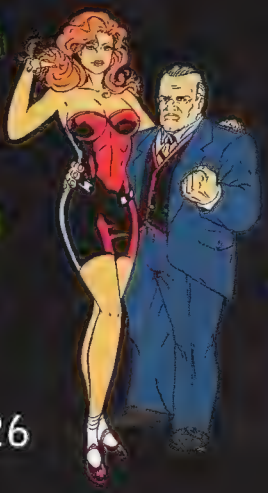

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ONE MUTANT AT A TIME

Adam, Andy and their father Joe Kubert have spent over a year with the X-Men, one card at a time. In September, the shiny fruits of their labors will be available for all to see when Fleer's Ultra X-Men hits stores everywhere. This "uncanny" set, made up of 100 cards, features your favorite mutants on the front of each card and all sorts of origins, powers and storylines dealing with the X-Men comics and animated series on the back.

Division of the labor went fairly smooth, except for the inevitable arguments as to who would get to do which characters. Eventually, like a good pair of brothers, Adam and Andy took turns picking. And Joe?

"We gave him the ones that neither of us wanted to do," Andy recalls, laughing. "To him, it didn't matter," Adam adds. "He didn't know the characters, so he just said, 'Give me 30 of them and I'll be happy.'"

That doesn't mean that Joe Kubert's work should be overlooked. Far from it. Both brothers even reviewed his work and made suggestions. "There was one card where I said, 'Dad, he's not 40 years old; he's 18,' Adam chuckles in reference to Shatterstar. "Since my dad doesn't know about the X-Men, the cool part was to see his interpretation," Andy enthuses. "He did a Weapon X card that was phenomenal."

Doing card art, as opposed to comic art, has its own special focus. "You try to pick something that's dramatic," says Adam, "because you're only talking about one illustration as opposed to 22 pages of art. You pick something that effectively dramatizes and tells you about the character in one drawing. For the most part, you want to show as much of the character as you can, because that's what they want to see."

"I try to do each card with the same approach as a cover," Andy says. "You try to make it leap off the card as much as you can."

As for their favorite cards, both were especially fond of the "Age of Apocalypse" cards, which are flip cards showing both the regular and "Age" characters. Otherwise, Andy's favorite is the Juggernaut, and Adam's is Weapon X. And besides having a few cards that they wish they could go back and redo, Andy has one other minor complaint.

"I wish they would print the pencils that we did," he says, referring to the Fleer color process that requires pencil art only. "My dad did his in pen and ink, and his were gorgeous before they colored them. It'd be really nice to see those in print somewhere."

But don't go thinking Andy's trashing the card set; he just has a hard time deciding how the final product compares to the original pencils.

"It's so different from what we did. I guess it depends on who's looking at it. I should run for office," he laughs. "It just comes out looking like a painted card. And if you like painted cards, then you're gonna love this. For the most part, they came out really nice. Looking at the whole set, I'm very happy with it."

have changed that aspect, but I'm still trying to tell a story and make it clear and fun for people to look at and read."

Andy's route to the *X-Men*, one of Marvel's top-selling titles, was a bit more roundabout. "I was the regular fill-in artist when Jim Lee, Whilce Portacio, Marc Silvestri and Rob Liefeld were all doing the X-books," he says. "Once those guys went to form Image Comics and Jim left the title to do *WildC.A.T.s*, Bob [Harras] called me and asked if I wanted to do it. It took me a second and a half to say yes."

A couple of the "painted-looking" cards from the new Fleer Ultra X-Men set.

Like his brother, Andy has a great relationship with his co-workers. "I've been working for Bob for the past three or four years, and I talk to him every day. We've gotten to be pretty good friends."

Andy, just like Adam, had to change his style somewhat when he started his ongoing *X-Men* run in 1991, with issue #14. "There was a certain look and feel that the book had, and I think it had to continue. The fans expect to see a certain 'in-your-face' kind of thing, and a drastic change wouldn't be good for the title. So I had to pretty much stick along the same line as what was being done before. Or try to."

And now that Andy's got a few years of merry mutants under his belt, he can start choosing favorite characters. "Visually, it's gotta be Gambit. You've got the hair going, the beard goin' and the coat. And just all kinds of neat stuff."

While both men may be fond of a number of issues they've each done, they have managed to narrow that list down a bit. Andy's favorite *X-Men* issue is #33, with its flashback featuring Gambit and Sabretooth. "I liked the story and, for some reason artwise, that one just clicked with me and Matt Ryan inking and the coloring. When I look back, I'm really, really happy with that one."

Adam's favorite is *Wolverine* #90, where Wolverine fights Sabretooth: "Doing all the gatefolds and stuff was a pain in the ass to draw, but I loved doing that issue. All it was, basically, was one big fight, but it was a confrontation that everybody was waiting for."

Wolverine #90 came out right before the time-warp "The Age of Apocalypse" story and had a rather memorable last page, where Wolverine braces Sabretooth's head with two claws and is debating whether to extend the middle claw or not. "We did that page a couple of times," Adam recalls. "After reading the plot, I thought I was to show Wolverine's claws going up though Sabretooth's head. As an editorial decision, they decided not to. What I do when I do my work is to try to push it a couple of steps further, and then reel it back a bit. They didn't want to show it, and I can understand that. It is a kid's book, basically."

The Future's Past

Then came "The Age of Apocalypse," and a major shift in both titles' directions and both

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artists' workloads. Andy handled *The Amazing X-Men*, while Adam penciled *Weapon X*. "It was a lot of work, and a lot of fun," Andy laughs. "I wish we could have taken three months on one of those issues, because there was a lot that had to go into that. The deadlines were pretty harrowing. Actually, we started way back last summer doing all these new character designs, but when it came down to it, it was hard to coordinate everything and know what everybody else was doing. You had to think about the backgrounds. We were all used to the regular X-Men, but then to switch and try to get into [the timeflip versions'] heads, it was pretty tough."

"I didn't have to deal with nearly as many characters as Andy did, and I'm not sure I could have," Adam admits. "When you're drawing these books, you're not just drawing people walking around. You've got to know how these people react to different situations and what their expressions are going to be. So when you get all-new characters in a new surrounding, it takes a couple of issues to figure out what's going on and what the acting is all about. On *Weapon X*, it was easier."

"Adam's right," Andy says. "As far as living with something and getting into it in a few issues, it does take a while. When you're tight on deadlines and stuff like that, it's kind of hard to get a roll on it. I think we pulled it off pretty well."

Both brothers have no plans to move on to other titles in the foreseeable future. Andy hedges a bit, though, in regard to a long-term commitment on *X-Men*. "I can't put a time limit on it, because tomorrow I could just wake up and say, 'I can't do it anymore. I just don't have it in me,'" he confides, but is quick to add, "But right now, I'm still having fun with it. We're just breaking in a new inker, Cam Smith, and Scott Lobdell's going to be writing for a few issues and then Mark Waid's going to be taking over [with #51]. That gets the blood flowing. I've talked with Mark and he's got some really good ideas. I can't wait to start."

Adam makes no bones about his desire to stay put. "Right now I'm as juiced on the book as when I started," he declares. "Sure, I've thought about what it would be like doing another book, because there are other characters that I'd like to do. But then I think I'll just call Larry and ask him to write them in if I really want to draw them. It may sound kind of geeky, but Wolverine is my favorite character. There's so much that you can do with him and that's being done, story-wise and personality-wise. I'm happy where I'm at."

Logan talks tough in the Adam-penciled *Wolverine*.

Duking it Out

As with any brothers, the inevitable question is if there's any sibling rivalry at work here. "Well, there's this boxing ring right behind the studio, and any time there's an argument, we just duke it out," Adam deadpans, and Andy cracks up. "Our studios are next door to one another," says Andy. "It's like when we were both living in our parents' house growing up. Most of the time we get along great. There are times when we bicker back and forth, but as far as the work goes, nah, there really isn't too much of a rivalry."

In fact, when their schedules permit, they'd like to do more work together in the future. "As a matter of fact, there's this card set we just did along with our dad," Adam notes (see sidebar). "That was an opportunity to work together, just not on the same artwork. The last thing we did together—just the two of us—was the cover to *Wizard* #38."

But regardless of whether these two are working together or individually, they're having the time of their lives.

"You get up in the morning and it's just a lot of fun to do," says Andy. "I love it. It's absolutely a blast. I can think of no better job than this one." W

Paul J. Grant, who interviewed Denny O'Neil in Wizard *#49, once talked Galactus out of eating his planet.*

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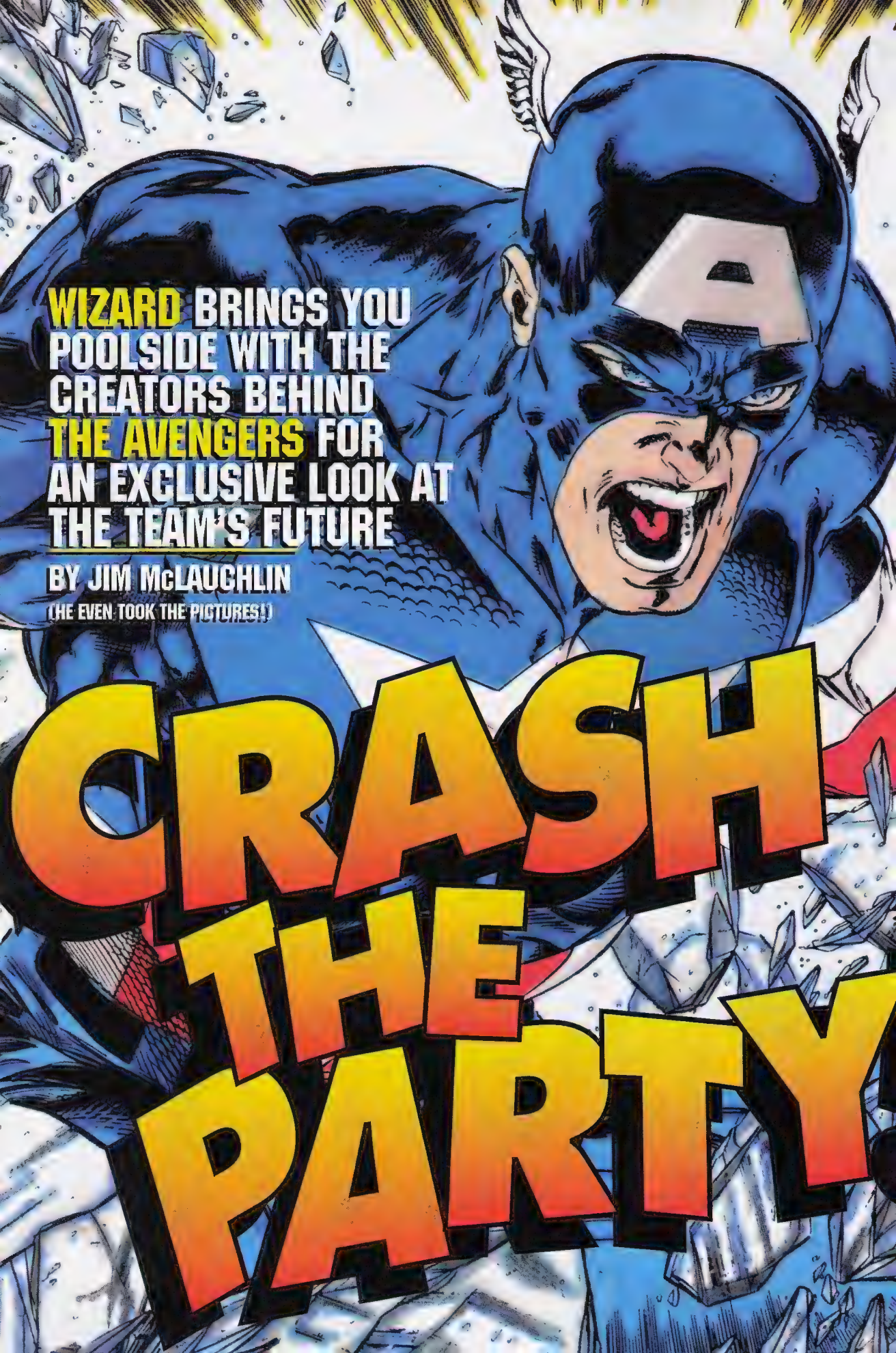

WIZARD BRINGS YOU POOLSIDE WITH THE CREATORS BEHIND THE AVENGERS FOR AN EXCLUSIVE LOOK AT THE TEAM'S FUTURE

BY JIM McLAUGHLIN
(HE EVEN TOOK THE PICTURES!)

CRASH THE PARTY

LIKE BANK ROBBERIES, stag parties and a well-executed option play in football, comic books don't just happen. They're planned. Very often, this planning has to take place many months—sometimes even more than a year—in advance to make things work out right.

And so it came to be that in late July of 1995, Marvel Comics brought all the Avengers powers-that-be together to determine just what was going to happen in all the Avengers-related books, not only for the remainder of 1995, but for a good portion of 1996. Writers and editors were flown in from at least two of the four corners of the globe to Stately Macchio Manor, home of *Avengers* editor Ralph Macchio, to plot the future of Earth's Mightiest Heroes. Much pizza was eaten. Much Diet Coke was slugged back. A fair amount of swimming was done, and a basic framework for the next six months of Avengers comics, complete with new titles, new creators and new directions, was mapped out.

The whole ordeal lasted three days. We were invited in to observe the second half of the last intense day to let you, the *Wizard* reader, know what happens during a major comic skull-session. So tape recorder and legal pad in hand, and Pontiac Grand Am under butt, I set off to the wilds of New Jersey and elusive Macchio Manor.

After finally finding the joint, I was admitted by the Avengers' trusty butler, Jarvis, and led to the pool area in back.

AS I WALKED IN, big things were already happening. The decision was being made to cancel *Force Works* and *War Machine* in January 1996 and fold most of the Force Works characters back in with the Avengers. A new start for the Avengers was needed for January '96.

Mark Gruenwald: "What can we do at the start of the year, format-wise, that says to everyone that this is a new starting point for the Avengers titles?"

Mark Waid: "Can we do an insert in the other Marvel titles? A small-sized thing that will fit in the middle, say, eight pages or so?"

Joe Andreani: "Should we do #0 issues?"

Gruenwald: "Well, we have to ask ourselves—how do we feel about doing #0 issues?"

There is a fair amount of discussion, most of it against doing #0 issues. Most of the group seems to think that zeroes are more a marketing ploy than a true comic book product. There appears to be a genuine concern throughout the group over how much these comics would cost and how much the average fan has to spend. A substantial portion of this concern comes from Waid, who seems the most "fan-like" of the group. Finally, the question is called. Zero issues or not? Three vote for them. Eight vote against. One unnamed abstainer is asleep in the shade. No #0 issues it is.

Terry Kavanagh: "Hey, did we abandon that idea of doing the 'secret origin' issues?"

Gruenwald: "Well, we've got that George Pérez 'Avengers: Year One'-type project, but that probably won't be ready by January."

Waid: "Since we've got umpteen zillion Avengers, how about a bind-in scorecard? You know, like in 'You can't tell the players without a scorecard.'"

More ideas are batted back and forth, but nothing is finalized in terms of a new format for January.

THE TALK MOVES TO CHARACTERS. Waid: "All the plans we make seem to revolve around Cap, Thor and Iron Man as the linchpins of the Avengers. Maybe we can't assume this. Maybe this is an idea that we've got to test out."

AVENGERS MEMBERSHIP ROLL CALL No less than a dozen heads took part in finalizing the hatching of the new Avengers. They were (from left to right, standing): **MATT IDELSON** (*Avengers, Captain America* and *Thor* assistant editor), **TERRY KAVANAGH** (*Avengers* co-writer, *Iron Man* writer), **BOB HARRAS** (*Avengers* co-writer), **RALPH MACCHIO** (*Avengers, Captain America* and *Thor* editor), **WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS** (Soon-to-be *Thor* writer); (left to right, seated on diving board): **ANDY LANNING** (*Force Works* writer), **JOE ANDREANI** (Assistant to the Chief of All Things Avengers), **DAN ABNETT** (*Force Works* and *War Machine* writer), **MARK WAID** (*Captain America* writer), **NEL YOMTOV** (*Force Works, Iron Man, War Machine* editor), **MICHAEL MARTS** (*Avengers, Captain America* and

NEL TAKES A POOL BREAK

Matt Idelson: "Well, the Avengers will have just come through all the trauma in 'The Crossing' storyline. These are the three main guys—the three leaders. Wouldn't they be the ones who would come together to sort everything out?"

Andy Lanning: "I think that's more the readers' perceptions of the characters than the actual characters' perceptions of themselves."

I suddenly realize that I am sitting among 12 grown men all talking about comic characters as if they were real people. Now I don't feel so bad about many of those late-night, beer-soaked comic conversations with my buddies.

Michael Marts: "Maybe after 'The Crossing,' we ought to have 'The Rebuilding.' Say a three-part story that runs one chapter each in *Captain America*, *Iron Man* and *Thor*."

Dan Abnett: "Or do a fourth part that brings them back to the Avengers."

Waid: "But each chapter should still have a definitive ending. It's a show of bad faith if we just set them up for a finale that costs megabucks. At the end, I want the kids standing there with their $1.95 in hand just waiting for the next *Avengers*, because they really want the book."

WHILE GRUENWALD is effectively "running" the meeting, free-form substitution is actually the order of the day. The participants wander in and out of the conversation at will. Nel Yomtov gets up and wanders over to the in-ground pool to dip his feet in and cool off. The atmosphere is very laid back and open, which seems to facilitate the free exchange of ideas. At one point, Macchio gets up, grabs a big net, and starts cleaning his pool, throwing comments back into the conversation the whole time.

Gruenwald: "In February, we launch the first of our six bimonthly team-up specials that will have strong tie-ins to regular continuity. Who do we start with?"

Waid: "Iron Man is a good place to start. He'll have more heat."

Gruenwald: "Spoken like a Cap writer. OK, who's he paired with?"

Practically every Avenger you can name is thrown around. Personally speaking, I'm a big fan of teaming Iron Man with Hawkeye. I've always dug Hawkeye and, after all, Hawkeye got his start with Iron Man back in the old *Tales of Suspense* as a "misunderstood" villain. Lanning is a big fan of Hawkeye too. "I love to see Hawkeye anywhere. He's the original bad boy of comics." The general consensus, however, carries that Iron Man will be paired with the Wasp. Her new high-tech look should be something that people will want to see and something that the group will want to show off. The Vision and the Scarlet Witch are looking like they'll be featured in issue #2 and Captain America and the Black Widow are tentatively paired for #3. The entire conversation to slate three team-up books, six months' worth of stories, takes about three minutes.

Gruenwald: "These will be the equivalent of our 'Unlimited' titles, but they'll be bimonthly, not quarterly. We're also looking at a smaller size than 'Unlimited,' probably 48 pages."

Idelson: "If we do six of these a year, why don't we alternate heroes and villains? That would be something really different."

Gruenwald: "Like the old Marvel *Super-Villain Team-Up*?"

Bob Harras: "No, there's so much more you can do. We can do a real in-depth exploration of these guys and find out what they're all about. That's something you don't see every day."

GRUENWALD: "I also want to jazz up all the Avengers paraphernalia. All of it—the Quinjets, the mansion, everything."

Abnett: "Yes. The Quinjets are still very cool in a historical perspective, but the mansion's interior, above and beyond all else, just has to be redesigned. It has to look more '90s."

Gruenwald: "Should we do this from a story-related perspective? Could we? Should we do something where we crash all the Quinjets and they have to be replaced? Or do we just replace them and say it was time for an upgrade?"

Lanning: "Do you want to use any of the Force Works technology?"

Gruenwald: "Yeah, we could use the old Vroom Rooms as new living quarters."

Nel Yomtov: "I guess that would mean each room would have Vroom closets."

The Vroom Room is Force Works' training room, an adaptable, holographically-enhanced room, very similar to the Holodeck on *Star Trek*.

Ralph Macchio: "That's a good idea. Each Avenger could really personalize their own quarters. When Hercules is around, he could have big columns and Greek architecture."

"LOOK OUT BELOW!"

Gruenwald: "I like the idea. We should find ourselves a real tech-maven. Someone who could go in and design all these things for us."

Abnett and Lanning press hard for the inclusion of a lot of former Force Works technology in the new Avengers, now that *Force Works* is being canceled. They bring up Force Works'

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transport, the Hexships, and Plato, Force Works' computer butler.

Gruenwald: "Plato could be a fun vehicle to involve Jarvis some more. Now that Marilla is gone, Plato could give him someone to play off of."

GRUENWALD: "All right, we're going to start a new Avengers title, which will contain many of the old Force Works characters. What do we want to call it? Do we call it *Avengers, Volume Two*? Do we re-start *Avengers* at #1 as *Avengers, Volume One*? Do we go with different volumes?"

Waid: "I don't know. If we do a relaunch with 'The Crossing' and then hit them with a new #1, it just seems redundant."

Harras: "I agree. *Avengers* is approaching an anniversary with issue #400 anyway. Let's not get hung up on this. I think if the story is there, if the writing is good, the numbering is irrelevant."

Gruenwald: "Is the new title where we want to put our two new Avengers—Cybermancer and Masque?"

Cybermancer is a brand-spankin'-new character just introduced in *Force Works* #17. Masque is the old Iron Man villainess who used to go by the name of Madame Masque. The matter is discussed and the general consensus holds that both characters will be in the new Avengers title, which debuts in January. The other matter of what to call the new title goes unresolved for another day.

SOMEONE FINALLY REALIZES that the whole time we've been here, it's been 100 degrees with 120 percent humidity and we're all sweating like crazy. Time for a dip in the pool! As Gruenwald challenges Abnett to a butt-diving competition (more on that later), I realize that we haven't even touched on Thor. Time to corner William Messner-Loebs by the cabana and get the scoop from him.

William Messner-Loebs: "I'm going to turn Thor into a frog."

Me: "Hey! That's been done already."

Messner-Loebs: "Yeah, I guess so. Been there, done that. Actually, I've been heartily encouraged to take the character and the *Thor* title as far as I can. The bulk of the action in *Thor* will take place on Earth, because there's some question as to what the relationship with Asgard is. Events will be set in motion in Asgard which will, well, essentially end the world for everyone there. But nobody notices."

MEANWHILE, back at the pool, Gruenwald has vanquished Abnett in their competition in the Ancient Art of Butt-diving (the act of jumping off the diving board and landing your ass in a free-floating inner tube), beating him four to one. Kavanagh plays at devil sticks as Macchio stuffs the last of the pizza boxes into a garbage can. The day is officially over as Macchio kicks everyone out of his yard and herds them into the van for the trip back to the Marvel offices in Manhattan.

Abnett: "Marvel flew Andy and me over from England for this meeting. It's always a lot of fun, just to get to sit down and meet with everyone face to face."

Macchio: "It's amazing what you can get done when you get everyone together. It's so much easier than dealing by phone, fax and Fed Ex."

Gruenwald: "We came in not knowing much about what we were going to do in '96, and now we have a much clearer direction. It's all still subject to approval, but at least now we know what we want to get approved. I think we came up with a lot of good ideas. I'm pretty excited about what we can do now. It's going to be fun going into work tomorrow."

Jim McLauchlin dies just a little every time the Minnesota Twins lose a game. Boy, he's in pretty tough shape this year.

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

Here's a look at what the Avengers Universe is scheduled to look like as of January 1996:

THE AVENGERS
Writers: Bob Harras and Terry Kavanagh
Penciler: Mike Deodato Jr.
Inker: Tom Palmer

THE AWESOME AVENGERS
(new bimonthly Avengers team-up title)
Writers: Will vary, but will usually be Dan Abnett, Bob Harras, Andy Lanning or Terry Kavanagh.
Pencilers and inkers: Could be anyone

CAPTAIN AMERICA
Writer: Mark Waid
Penciler: Ron Garney
Inker: To be determined

FORCE WORKS
Canceled as of January

IRON MAN
Writer: Terry Kavanagh
Penciler: Heitor Oliveira
Inker: Mark McKenna

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS (new Avengers title)
Writers: Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning
Penciler: Jim Cheung
Inker: Rey Garcia

THOR
Writer: William Messner-Loebs
Penciler & Inker: Mike Deodato Jr.

WAR MACHINE
Canceled as of January

CBIQ

COMIC BOOK INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT

HEY! HEY, YOU! YEAH, YOU SITTIN' ON THE JOHN! THINK YA KNOW A HELL OF A LOT ABOUT COMICS? WELL, WHAT FOLLOWS ARE 20 OF THE HARDEST QUESTIONS EVER SLAPPED TOGETHER BY A BAND OF CONSTIPATED FANBOYS.

THIS TIME AROUND, WE'RE GRADING YOU AGAINST THE BEST ADVICE WE CAN OFFER SUPERMAN WHILE HE SPENDS SOME TIME IN THE BIG HOUSE. THE HIGHER THE SCORE, THE SOUNDER THE ADVICE. LOOK IN *WIZARD* BULLPEN FOR THE ANSWERS, BY THE WAY.

SCORE	RANK
0-5	If the soap hits the ground, let it lie.
6-12	Get a huge Rita Hayworth poster (hey, it worked for Tim Robbins).
13-19	Don't go for chow when Dahmer's workin' the grill.
20	If your cellmate approaches you to play house, and you get a choice, be the daddy.

1. Who were the Avengers chasing when they rescued Captain America from suspended animation?
A) The Hulk
B) Kang
C) Blizzard
D) Baron Zemo

2. What is the name of the scientist that befriended Peter Parker (when he thought he was the clone and was calling himself Ben Reilly)?
A) Spencer Smythe
B) Miles Warren
C) Ted Nugent
D) Seward Trainer

3. The reason Sabretooth is acting like some big overgrown puppy is because:
A) Professor X mindwiped him.
B) Wolverine stabbed him in the head.
C) he was tortured to the breaking point and snapped.
D) he's in heat and he's hoping it'll help him score.

4. Quick! What was the cover price of *Fantastic Four* #1?
A) 10¢
B) 12¢
C) 15¢
D) $13,750

5. Static's 25th anniversary issue was celebrated with him:
A) Going up against Hardware and Icon.
B) Teaming up with the New Titans.
C) Finally baggin' his girlfriend.
D) Greasin' himself up and slidin' down the lanes at the local bowlin' alley.

6. What was the name of the government-backed mercenary group that Al Simmons belonged to before he became Spawn?
A) Team 7
B) Operation: Knightstrike
C) The Howling Commandos
D) Does it matter? All those stupid teams are so interchangeable! So all you have to do is slap a different color face paint on a guy, give him a squeegee instead of a rifle, and bam, suddenly he's supposed to be something special? We don't think so.

7. Who was *never* an Avenger?
A) Spider-Man
B) Daredevil
C) Stingray
D) Gilgamesh, The Forgotten One

8. Whom have the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles *never* crossed over with?
A) The Tick
B) Cerebus
C) The Savage Dragon
D) Flaming Carrot

9. What formula did Baron Zemo invent that accidentally glued his mask to his face?
A) Elmersium
B) Barnaclus
C) Adhesive X
D) Movietheatrefloorium

10. The disease that no mutant in the Marvel Universe wants to contract is:
A) Viral-X.
B) X-crement.
C) The Legacy Virus.
D) Over-X-posure.

11. How was Elektra originally "killed"?
A) Bullseye ran her through with her own sai
B) Kingpin gave her a lethal bear hug
C) Punisher shot her before she could kill Ben Urich
D) She read a preview of the convoluted mess that Daredevil would soon become, clutched her chest (Woo-woo!) and just keeled over

12. The only Guardian still kickin' around after *Zero Hour* was:
A) Boodikka.
B) Uatu.
C) Ganthet.
D) Mugato.

13. The best weapon to use against The Spectre is:
A) The Shroud of Turin.
B) The Ring of Ma'ruf.
C) The Spear of Destiny.
D) The Crown of the Ages.

14. Before being the Sorcerer Supreme, Stephen Strange was a:
A) Carnival Barker
B) Surgeon
C) Banker
D) Stage magician, just like that David Copperfield geek. And how the hell did Copperfield bag a babe like Claudia Schiffer? We'll start yankin' bunnies outta every orifice if it'll get us babes.

15. Miracleman's daughter is called:
A) Priss
B) Winter
C) Miraclegirl
D) Mirra

16. The Hate Monger was revealed to be:
A) Adolf Hitler.
B) Josef Stalin.
C) The Red Skull.
D) Baron Zemo.

17. What killed the original Captain Marvel?
A) A star going supernova
B) Cancer
C) The Ultimate Nullifier
D) Bad fish

18. That enigmatic John Constantine first showed up in what comic?
A) *Hellblazer*
B) *Saga of the Swamp Thing*
C) *The Books of Magic*
D) *Chain-Smokin' Sting-Lookalikes in Trench Coats Quarterly*

19. Who played Captain America in the *ahem* critically acclaimed 1989 film?
A) Matt Salinger
B) Howie Long
C) Reb Brown
D) Steve Rogers (wow, that's like, so ironic)

20. At the end of *Superman/Aliens*, Superman got rid of the Alien embryo inside of him by:
A) downing six pots of coffee, four pints of pork lo mein and two dozen White Castle cheeseburgers and just...waitin'.
B) grabbing a firehose, duct-taping it into his mouth, turning up the faucet all the way and pointin' his butt toward the harbor.
C) whipping off his Superbriefs, strapping himself into one o' them gynecological-exam chairs and pushing with all his Kryptonian-spawned might.
D) getting near a yellow sun and coughing the little bastard up.

THE SOVEREIGN SEVEN GUEST STAR CONTEST

SOVEREIGN SEVEN ain't just any ol' DC title, ya know. It's a bit different. *Sovereign Seven* is a creator-owned property (owned by none other than top-flight writer Chris Claremont) that actually exists within the framework of the DC Universe. Heck, any DC character could come strolling into the pages of *Sovereign Seven* at any moment, just like Darkseid did in issue #1. So maybe DC would like to know which DC character you, the *Wizard* reader, would like to see in the pages of *Sovereign Seven*. You tell us who—and why—and you could walk away with some cool prizes.

This month's contest is sponsored by those people with a whole big friggin' comic universe to choose from.

HOW TO PLAY

Get a piece of paper and pen (or pencil, if you go for that "smudge" look) and tell us (in 100 words or less) which DC Universe character—hero, villain or civilian—you would most like to see in *Sovereign Seven*, and why you'd like to see that character in the book. It's that simple. You can pick whoever you want—Superman, Gorilla Grodd, Batman, The Calculator, whoever. But whoever you pick, be creative and be original. We like that. The most creative entries will walk away with some…

…Keen Prizes!

Grand Prize (1): One reader will get an actual original *Sovereign Seven* script autographed by writer Chris Claremont! Now that's *different*! But that's not all—we'll even throw in a page of *Sovereign Seven* layout sketches by artist Dwayne Turner! Oooogala! Hold on tight! That lucky winner also gets a *Sovereign Seven* #1 Premium Edition autographed by Chris Claremont!

First Prize (10): Ten readers will each receive a *Sovereign Seven* #1 Premium Edition autographed by Chris Claremont!

Second Prize (20): Twenty readers will each receive a *Sovereign Seven* poster autographed by both Chris Claremont and Dwayne Turner!

DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 30, 1995!

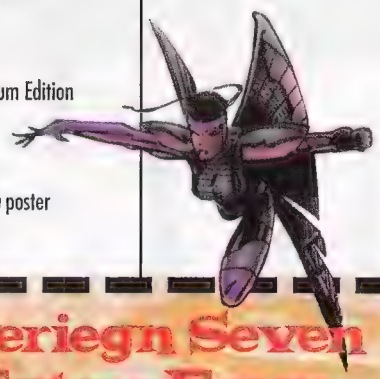
Fill this out, attach it to your guest star paragraph (which can be typed or neatly handwritten), toss it all in an envelope and send it to: Guest Star Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

The Legal Seventeen

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, DC Comics and Darkseid—you've already been in *Sovereign Seven*. Print your name, date of birth, address, city, state, zip and telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5-inch index card and attach your pick for a *Sovereign Seven* guest star. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry separately to: Guest Star Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. No mechanical reproductions of completed forms are accepted, but you can photocopy the entry form before filling it out if you don't want to mess up your magazine. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes will be offered. Prizes are awarded in the names of contest winners and are not transferable. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and rules hereof. Come to think of it, we won't let Reverse-Flash enter this contest, either. What a lame bad guy name. **All entries must be received at contest headquarters by November 30, 1995.**

Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Prize winners will be selected based on quality and creativity among all properly completed entries by Wizard Press.

For a list of winners, available after December 15, 1995, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Guest Star Contest Winners, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.



Official Soveriegn Seven Guest Star Entry Form

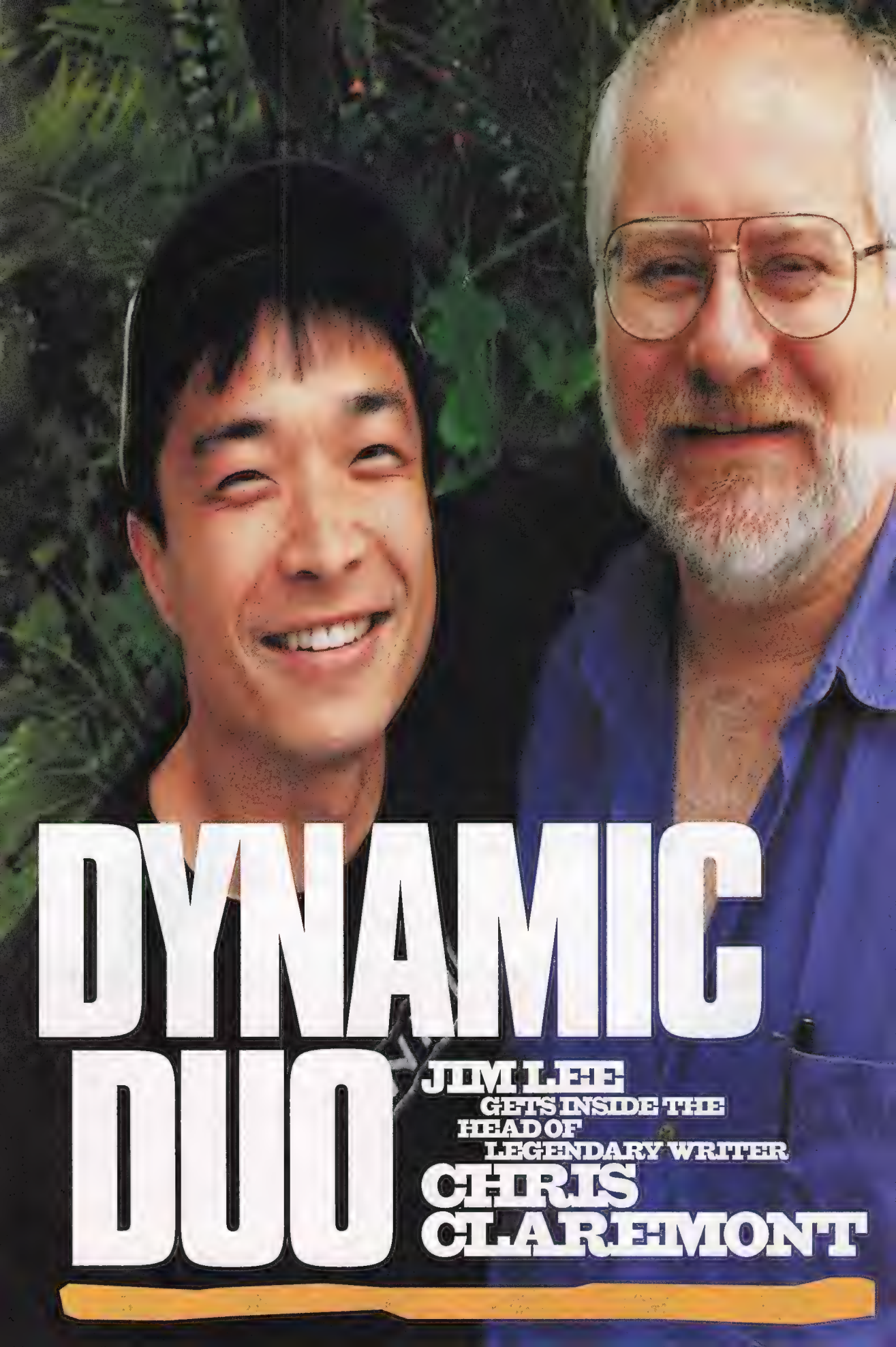
Name _____ Date of Birth _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number (with area code) _____ Guest Star _____

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR GUEST STAR PARAGRAPH TO THIS FORM?


DYNAMIC DUO
JIM LEE GETS INSIDE THE HEAD OF LEGENDARY WRITER
CHRIS CLAREMONT

When I was a kid growing up in suburban St. Louis, my favorite comic book was *The Uncanny X-Men*. While I was initially attracted to the series by the beautiful art of such talented pencil jockeys as Dave Cockrum, John Byrne and Paul Smith, I realized that unless some writer guy named Chris Claremont wrote the characters, they never seemed quite the same. The style and class he brought to all his endeavors influenced several "generations" of comic book fans and lifted this obscure, struggling title called *The Uncanny X-Men* to prominence in the comic marketplace and held it there during a long and fruitful 17 years.

In my mind, Chris was—and is—as close to Stan Lee as my generation will ever see. A talented wordsmith, Chris reinvented the superhero genre and showed comicdom that our heroes could be of mythological proportions yet still retain a human heart. The strength he brought to his female characters, his knack for creating passionate warrior-philosophers and his ability to sum up the essence of character in just one or two lines—these were the cornerstones of Chris' style, and made him...the best at what he does. (Sorry, Chris. I couldn't resist—I love that line!)

It was one of my earliest goals in this business to work on the characters I loved as a kid. Luckily, Chris waited for me to grow up, go through college and get hired by Marvel so I could eventually work with him on the X-Men. And it was on our run of *WildC.A.T.s* #10-#13, when I realized that no matter what he works on, Chris always makes it a class act. While we have gone our separate ways since then, we still have managed to get together to talk about old times and, more importantly, about our next cool projects. Without further ado—I present Mr. Chris Claremont.

BY JIM LEE

Photography by John T. Barr

JIM: You essentially started out as a gopher for Marvel Comics, right?

CHRIS: Back in '68. Me and the Grateful Dead started at almost the same time.

Did you have a formal education?

Yes. Four years at Bard College in New York State majoring in Political Theory and Acting. While I was at school, I did what we called a field period which was a two-month break in mid-winter where you were expected by the college to get a job in your major field. Through a happy accident, I ended up working at Marvel as a gopher. This was back in the days when the Marvel offices were set up in one modest room with partitions and about 11 people all told. One of the first things that happened while I was there was the transition from Werner Roth to Neal Adams on *X-Men*. Neal's first issue came out the month I was there.

So did you actually see the originals come in and stuff?

Oh yeah. It was a hoot. My first contribution to the Marvel canon was in shooting the breeze with Roy Thomas, who wrote *X-Men*. For the story in *X-Men* #59 [1969], I planted the seed of the idea that essentially sent the Sentinels into the sun, by noting the current theory that solar radiation was a genetic trigger in evolutionary mutation.

I always thought that was a really cool way that the story ended.

It was just very unusual in that the X-Men are fighting and getting their asses kicked and then finally outsmarting the Sentinels and convincing them all to commit mass suicide.

Marvel heroes were always up against forces and powers and villains that were so much stronger than they were on the surface, yet they would always find a way to win—either by persuading the Silver Surfer that humanity was worth saving, by coming up with the right gizmo or by outmaneuvering the computer and persuading it that it should really commit suicide. It was just this sort of exciting underdog/Warner Brothers/Jimmy Cagney sort of approach to heroism.

Whereas Superman was Superman. Who was more powerful than him?

I assume you are lamenting the fact that that has somehow changed. Maybe it's a generational kind of thing. Creators who came out of the Depression and World War II had a philosophy where no matter how outmatched the hero was, he would find a way. Creators who came in during the '60s, '70s and '80s had a more ambiguous and cynical tone in their work following Vietnam and Watergate. Do you think what was going on in American history when you were growing up was what gave you the insights for *Uncanny X-Men* ?

YOU COME INTO SITUATIONS LOOKING FOR THE HOPE AND POSSIBILITIES RATHER THAN HOW IT IS GOING TO SCREW YOU.

I don't know, it was never anything I thought a lot about. It was something that came naturally from inside of me, and I suspect part of it had to do with being Jewish and an immigrant. Part of it had to do with being a loner in school. Just the sense that you want something to look up to and something to belong to; you want the ideal and the reality to be one. You come into situations looking for the hope and possibilities rather than how it is going to screw you.

Right. When I was younger and I first started to buy *Uncanny X-Men*, one of the things that really clicked with me was the fact that the characters were in school. It was a cool and unusual take on superheroes.

If I was going to present the lives of mutants, whose powers and abilities were so far outside of our normal experience, how would we relate to them? You give it a totally traditional structure like a school, things that the reader can relate to on a primal level, so you can look at any of the X-Men and say, "That's just like my life." Even though they are superheroes, you have that anchor which allows the reader to empathize completely with the hero so that you accept the superheroics as an extension of a human being.

Do you feel that essentially all has been said within this genre that can be said?

Well, if I say yes, then you and I are out of business. No, I think there is a lot more to be said because each generation has to redefine the medium in terms that are relevant to it.

I remember when we were working together that it seemed like part of your creative efforts were channeled towards

VITAL STATS

Name: Chris Claremont

Date of Birth: He ain't tellin'

Occupation: Writer

Base of Operations: New York

Career Highlights: Seventeen-year writer of *The Uncanny X-Men*, which helped propel the characters to pop culture icons; helped launch an all-new *X-Men* #1 with penciler Jim Lee in 1991; has unprecedented agreement with DC Comics allowing his creator-owned series *Sovereign Seven* to interact with other series and characters in the DC Universe.

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almost protecting the X-Men from their use because Marvel wanted to put Wolverine all over the place. A lot of times things were impacting on the stories you were telling. You had a desire to really hide or shield the X-Men so that other writers or editors couldn't get their hands on them and just throw them into other projects that were completely inappropriate.

Yeah, or appropriate. I mean the problem is that tenure creates a proprietary approach to characters in the sense that I have been around for years and years, and therefore I know them best. For the record: 17 years. But the problem is that you are not working in a vacuum. This is the frustration that is work-for-hire. You have to allow for the fact that—hard as it may be to accept—somebody is going to come in at some point and say, look, we need this character in such-and-such-a-book or you can't do this with these characters because of the impact it will have on these other titles in the line.

[The more interesting] aspects of the past three or four years was watching all of the plot lines of the X-Men books that I had bounced before I left, spin themselves out in the course of the book with slight variations. Obviously, there was something there that clicked with the creative and editorial staffs. I guess it was just a need to define it in their terms rather than define it in mine. You are always going to have that tug of war. You are always going to have someone, for example, like Batman editor Denny O'Neil who has his own proprietary and absolute view of Batman. Denny O'Neil versus some guy who might come in off the street with what may turn out to be a valid and more contemporary view but is totally at odds with the one that is there.

And the question you have to answer as a publisher is: Do you find a way to accommodate both approaches or do you choose one versus the other? Again, this is why doing my own stuff is so much more relaxing in many ways because I don't have to worry about that.

What do you feel was your best run on the X-Men?

I think probably the happiest time overall was working with Weezie [former X-Men editor Louise Simonson] and then only slightly less so with [former X-editor] Ann Nocenti. When I was working with Weezie, [artists] John Byrne, Dave Cockrum, Paul Smith, John Romita Jr. and Frank Miller. It was with the *X-Men: God Loves, Man Kills* graphic novel. It was the *Wolverine* mini-series with Frank. It was the *X-Men/Teen Titans* crossover one-shot. It was the four-part Asgard story that started in *X-Men/Alpha Flight* and then went into the 1985 annuals.

It was catching a lot of artists right at the first crest of their careers. Frank [Miller] when he was just exploding like fireworks all over the place. Arthur Adams when he just came in.

Let's get your opinion on something: Are the real writers actually editors today?

I think the creative direction of the books in many respects is being defined by editors to a large extent. Either in terms of shaping the inspirations of the writers and their staffs, or how they tell the writers, "This is the plot. This is the direction we go in. Your job is to get us there. This is our goal. These are the steps we have to do along the way. Give me plots."

I think you can argue that from a marketing standpoint or from a commercial standpoint this is a more focused and acceptable approach. On the other hand, where's the impossible end? Where's the story that comes out of left field and allows you to go, "Ooh!" Where is your *Amazing Fantasy* #15?

Under what circumstances would you actually consider going back and doing the X-Men or do you not even miss writing those characters? Obviously it would be unlike any other creator in comics really coming back and doing something like that. You know, no one has had that kind of run on a group of characters. What are your thoughts about it?

Well, [Marvel Comics President] Jerry Calabrese and I actually talked about the same thing at this year's San Diego Comic-Con and I thought about it. I have thought about it off and on. You know, if somebody from Marvel called up and dropped like 10 million bucks on my desk and said, come on back, all is forgiven...I couldn't automatically say no. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Claremont left the X-Men over a disagreement with editorial policy. *X-Men* #3 (1991) was Claremont's last writing credit with the team.]

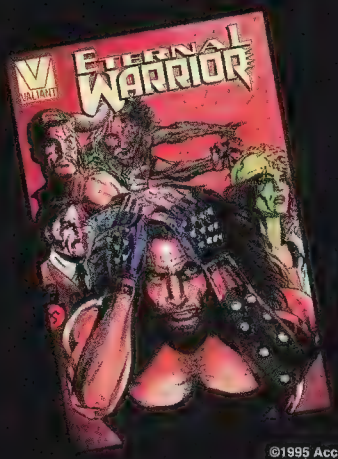
IF SOMEBODY FROM MARVEL CALLED UP AND DROPPED LIKE 10 MILLION BUCKS ON MY DESK AND SAID, COME ON BACK, ALL IS FORGIVEN... I COULDN'T AUTOMATICALLY SAY NO.

But the more I thought about it, it's been four years and the book has evolved in a vastly different direction. Characters have evolved in different directions; they build their own audiences. If I came back, I would either have to tap into storylines, characters and approaches that I am not comfortable with or I would have to set in motion a storyline to take the book to what I was comfortable with, which would mean invalidating huge chunks of continuity.

You have a lot of fans out there who

JUSTICE IS ETERNAL. IT'S JUST THE WEAPONS THAT CHANGE.

ETERNAL WARRIOR. IN OCTOBER.



49: IN THE HOT ZONE. ETERNAL WARRIOR FIGHTS TO STOP A DEADLY PLAGUE.
THE ADVENTURES OF AN IMMORTAL WARRIOR AND HIS CRUSADE FOR JUSTICE.
BY JOHN OSTRANDER AND JACKSON GUICE.

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enjoy the book as it is now. I would feel wrong coming in and just saying to them, "Well, screw you. This is my stuff. I am imposing my interpretation back on the X-Men. I am going back to the way I thought it was cool."

Right. But if I am Jerry Calabrese I would say to you, "Chris, why don't you come back and create a whole new book of mutants? *Your* version of the X-Men."

That's what I'm doing at DC. Only with *Sovereign Seven*, it's not mutants but it's my team. That's a whole different question. I mean if on one hand you are saying create a whole brand new series for Marvel that Marvel owns, then one of the questions you ask is, what happens in 10 years?

Or even six months.

Yeah, six months. The thing is, even the best contracts in the world are not ironclad guarantees because publishing is a dynamic medium. Given the Marvel that existed say in 1982 and the relationship I had with Louise Simonson, and even with [former Marvel Editor-in-Chief] Jim Shooter—even when we were at loggerheads—Marvel was about as wonderful a place as you could imagine. It was everything a writer could hope for. But through the dynamic of Marvel's ownership changing, the editor changing, the creative relationships changing...

What's going on today? How is your relationship with artist Dwayne Turner on *Sovereign Seven*?

I'd say in just about every respect, it is all I can hope for. For me, it's superb characterization, storytelling and setting. All the pieces are there.

And the fun is watching him get better. The issues he is drawing now is where a lot of the elements are starting to coalesce in that he is getting comfortable drawing the characters.

Sure. He is defining them, which is a little tricky sometimes.

You have to know what they look like, how they stand, how they dress. You generally need about six issues to get comfortable with the characters, the book and with your collaborator.

Just go back to the X-Men. I think *Uncanny* #248 [Lee's first issue] was a lovely issue. But the three-part "Acts of Vengeance" that you and I did [*Uncanny* #256-#258] was sort of like where we worked all this stuff out so that when we just bombed into the Captain America story in #268, everything gelled. The art is absolutely spectacular because the characters are there and the storytelling is there. All of what you want in an issue is there.

Do you think that there's too much material out on the stands?

If there is, I am willing to let the marketplace decide who survives and who doesn't. My faith is that if I'm on a rack with everybody else, I'll gamble that my skill, my talent and the stories I have to tell will give me an equal shot at success. But I guess it is saying that what I am doing now is unadorned and it is a reflection of my personality, my ambition, my goal and my character. And if that is what attracts and sustains a reader, then that is good. But I am not trying to write in the style of or write in the direction [of something else]. It is like when Frank Miller did *Ronin*. He could have just done it in the style of *Daredevil* and it would have sold probably gangbusters. For whatever reason, he wanted to branch off in another direction. The same with his *Sin City* now. This is the challenge; this is where his muse is taking him.

I look at a lot of John Byrne's stuff now and I don't find the style of drawing and the storytelling that he does as comfortable to my eye as earlier work.

You were always so diplomatic [*laughter*], but that is a great way of phrasing it.

Well, you know, I am not an art historian or an art critic. To say bad or good is presumptuous. I look at John's *Babe* and I like it. I look at *She-Hulk*, and I don't know if it was just the goofiness of the stories or the synergy of the creators or whatever, but I liked it that much more. But this is John's talent; it's John's skill. This is the road he is walking down. As a reader, I owe it to him to support him. At least to give it a decent shot. To gamble that the reward at the end will be worth the investment.

Getting back to the X-Men, was there a story that you wanted to do that you felt you were not allowed to do or that you didn't have the time to do? Was there one huge storyline or was everything working towards the apocalyptic "The Days of Future's Past" story from *Uncanny X-Men* #141-#142?

I LOOK AT A LOT OF JOHN BYRNE'S STUFF NOW AND I DON'T FIND THE STYLE OF DRAWING AND THE STORYTELLING THAT HE DOES AS COMFORTABLE TO MY EYE AS EARLIER WORK.

No, my overarching goal was heading towards *Uncanny* #300 and taking the world up to the brink of the war between humans and mutants with the Shadow King at the heart of it. And taking Wolverine through moderate degrees of hell along the way, making him a more totally natural character just because this is one of the things that always bugged everybody. Myself included.

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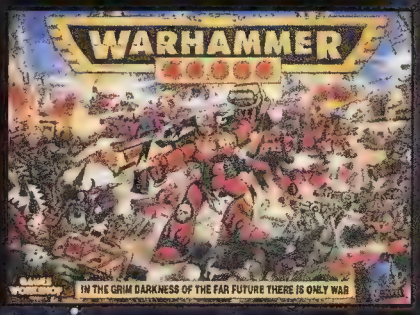

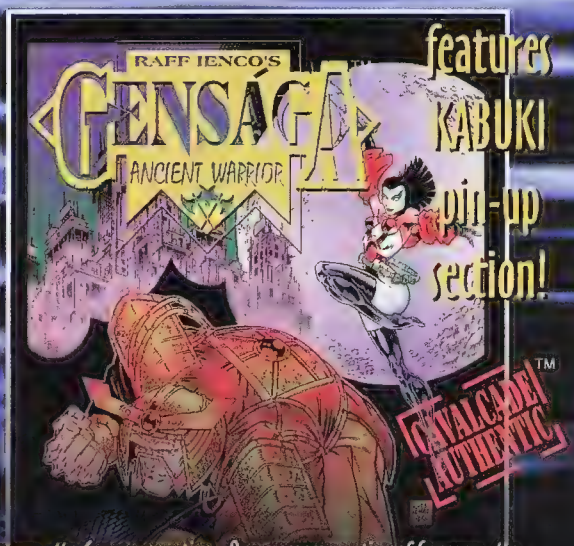

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Going back to an old lament that Stan Lee had: Daredevil was always a hair more popular than Iron Man and Stan's analysis was because when you came right down to it, with Iron Man, anybody could wear the suit. It could be Tony Stark. It could be his assistant James Rhodes. The suit is the suit, whereas Daredevil was a guy and the powers were unique to him. So from Stan's perspective, he always felt more comfortable with characters whose powers were theirs as opposed to the technology that they tapped into it.

That was sort of the way I was looking at Wolverine. If he was going to have claws and all these abilities, why not make them natural if for no other reason than it would save us a ton of explanation every three or four issues. Then you get letters saying, "How could he do that?"

But there is really only one story that has been sitting around and that is the Excalibur graphic novel that was to be drawn by Rick Leonardi. I've been talking to Jerry Calabrese about possibly finding a resolution to it.

What's on tap for the future?

My first priority is to get *Sovereign* up and running. Then to produce the second George Lucas novel, as a sequel to our novel *Shadow Moon*. And then the third on the hit parade is to finally nail down once and for all whether or not *Huntsman* is a go for Image. [EDITOR'S NOTE: Huntsman, who first appeared in Lee's *WildC.A.T.s* #10, has long been in discussion to have his own Image series.]

I think it's always been a go.

Oh no, we are just talking the nitty gritty. It's not a question. I don't mean in terms of whether it is something we'd like to do, just whether it is practical and viable financially in terms of getting an artist to do it the way I want to do it.

I don't want to put a year into this thing and come home with like five bucks.

Do you think you'd want to re-enter the Marvel Universe just like you have done with *Sovereign* in the DC Universe where you have something you own and you can then play with things that are owned by the company? Or are there any characters that are compelling enough that you would love to do?

The problem is that, as far as Marvel goes, I've pretty much done everybody. I've done my sort of classic Fantastic Four story. I did a stretch on Spider-Man even though it now turns out that he was only a clone. I've done Thor. I've done The Avengers. Unfortunately, because I was there for so long, it's very much a case of, "I've Been There, I've Done That." If I came up with a concept and the opportunity to establish a *Sovereign* relationship...I don't know.

At this point I feel a tremendous sense of obligation in regard to DC because it took the flyer. It took a gamble and I feel that it is incumbent upon me to see how it pays off.

MY FAITH IS THAT IF I'M ON A RACK WITH EVERYBODY ELSE, I'LL GAMBLE THAT MY SKILL, MY TALENT AND THE STORIES I HAVE TO TELL WILL GIVE ME AN EQUAL SHOT AT SUCCESS.

Jim Lee is the creator of WildC.A.T.s *and knows what Jae Lee looks like.*

SOVEREIGN SEVEN

HEIR TONIC

For those not in the know, DC Comics' *Sovereign Seven*, owned and written by Chris Claremont with art by Dwayne Turner (*Wolverine*), is the story of strangers in a strange land. Seven refugees from a reality-shattering cataclysm are cast ashore on a dangerous alien world called Earth. Each of the seven are heirs to a ruling family on his or her own shattered world.

The characters themselves take on old concepts and turn them on their side. The team's serious yet shy leader, **CASCADE**, has the ability to move across time and space. **CRUISER** is the comedic lady's man of the team who has super-strength and can fly. A charismatic social animal, **RAMPART** has the ability to erect virtually impenetrable shields of psychic force. **NETWORK** is Cascade's best friend and can telepathically link herself to another member of the team, or link the entire team together. Network and Cascade have a weird link, however, where they need each other in order for their powers to work at maximum performance. With lightning-like reflexes, **REFLEX** is the "big guy" of the group, though his size is more of a hindrance than an asset; he's so big that he barely fits anyplace he goes. A pure androgyny with features as appropriate for a man or woman, **INDIGO** is the tactical infiltrator of the team, as "he" is a master of concealing himself from others. Looking like a classic Olympic swimmer, **FINALE** can hold her breath underwater and withstand the ocean's pressures.

All seven are merely trying to survive on this new world, while battling the forces of Cascade's mother, Maitresse, along with the forces of Darkseid and the Female Furies. But as the story unfolds, it becomes clear that Sovereign Seven's joint destiny is not an accident. ■ *John B. Lacey (with thanks to DC Comics)*

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by Lea Hernandez

blazing the anime trail

Noburo Ishiguro helped make *Star Blazers* an anime favorite in America.

Noboru Ishiguro is not a well known name in the U.S., but his influence on the anime industry in Japan is comparable to Steven Spielberg or Orson Welles' influence on film or the late Dr. Osamu Tezuka's influence on manga.

The 56-year-old Ishiguro began his career in his 20s at the animation studio Artland—where he is now president—working on classics such as *Tetsuwan Atom* (*Astro Boy*) and *Space Cruiser Yamato* (*Star Blazers* in the U.S.). Later, he directed *Super-Dimensional Fortress Macross* (the lush movie version of the *Macross* TV series, known as *Robotech* in the U.S.).

A charming and self-effacing man with a wry sense of humor ("I was making animation before you were born!"), the busy director also teaches at the Yoyogi Institute of Animation, passing along his enthusiasm and skills to a new generation of artists.

A fan of American pop culture and movies (one of his favorites is *Anchors Aweigh*), Ishiguro longed to visit America probably as much as American anime fans want to visit Japan. The sense of wonder that has infused his works and his affection for America are both obvious when he relates the story of his first trip to the U.S. eight years ago. Ishiguro had intended to see John Williams (composer of the music for *Jaws* and *Star Wars*) conducting at the Hollywood Bowl. Unable to get to the performance, he watched the show on television at a hotel near the Bowl. As the orchestra played the 1812 Overture, complete with cannons, Ishiguro realized that shortly after he *saw* the cannons fired on television, he could *hear* the sound rolling up to the window of his hotel room. "That," he recalls with eyes aglow, "was when I knew I was in America!"

Ishiguro's best known work in the U.S. is *Space Cruiser Yamato*, which was syndicated as *Star Blazers*. *Yamato* was influential in the Japanese animation industry in many ways: it changed the way animation was made in Japan, the dedication of its fans began an anime boom, and it was a science fiction show in a time when sci-fi shows were not the norm.

Yamato, which originally aired in Japan in the '70s, was one of the first shows to marry visuals and music. The show was often finished a mere two days before it aired, sometimes even the morning it aired. The explosions were commonly miscued. Ishiguro elected to try music instead of sound, and a whole new way of putting pictures and sound together in anime began.

Space Cruiser Yamato had a dedicated following in Japan even though the TV series had poor ratings and a truncated run. This following caught the attention of the Japanese press and the anime boom began.

Ishiguro foresees that he may only be active in animation for five more years, since he wishes to retire soon and wants to focus on projects that are truly important to him. So he is chagrined at the present state of the industry, which is unwilling to invest in unproven work (i.e. works already successful in manga form).

Despite the current limitations, Ishiguro continues to be an innovator in the field, integrating computers into animation in a computer game animated by Haruhiko

Astro Boy. .Astro Boy. .he is brave and true and wise. .or something like that. .

Mikimoto (*Macross*, *Gunbuster*). His involvement in this game bears out his opinion that anime is headed towards multimedia, in the form of interactive games and videos. Ishiguro's studio, Artland, employs the state-of-the-art Animo system (see this month's news).

Even though Ishiguro soon may not be as active in the anime field, he has raised, through both his teaching and studio work, a host of talented artists who are already widely known in both Japan and the U.S.: Haruhiko Mikimoto, Nobuteru Yuuki (*Record of Lodoss Wars* and *Gunmm*, known as *Battle Angel* in the U.S.) and Toshihiro Hirano (*Iczer-1* and the first season opening credits for *Orange Road*).

What advice would Ishiguro give to aspiring artists? "Never forget others. There are many unknown artists, and there are no guarantees. Do your best work, and do nothing but good work from now on!"

When asked to sum up his career and his place in anime history, Ishiguro's reply is typically modest: "I was just doing my job. I feel lucky to have met people through my work."

(This interview was conducted at Anime Expo '95. Special thanks to Scott Frazier for arranging the interview and Andy Kim for translation. Additional material from the Anime Expo Program Guide and The Expo Files.)

manga & anime NEWS

TIME FOR A REALITY CHECK

Tavicat Comics brings you *Reality Check #1*, by Rosearik Rikki and Tavisha Wolfgarth (the team on Academy Comics' *Robotech: Clone*). In *Reality Check*, the protagonist's cat meets the protagonist's computer and the result is a sexy virtual reality cat-girl. *Reality Check* is described by the publisher as "No sex, little violence and TOTAL frustration!" It'll cost you $2.95 to see how total the frustration is, and it's available in October.

ANIME MEETS MUSIC

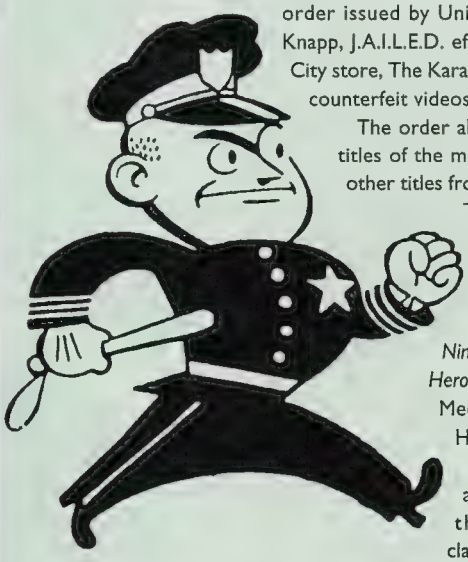
Rocker Matthew Sweet made being an anime fan considerably cooler when he used clips from the TV anime *Urusei Yatsura* (known in the U.S. as *Lum*) for his music video *I've Been Waiting*, and the animated *Cobra* for the video *Girlfriend*. Following in his footsteps is industrial band KMFDM, who used scenes from the Manga Entertainment anime thriller *Patlabor1* to promo their U.S. single *Juke Joint Jezebel*. Since KMFDM's previous video, *Drug Against War*, was composed of animated versions of the group's album covers, an anime video was seen as a logical next step. It probably didn't hurt that KMFDM member Sascha Konietzko, like Matthew Sweet, is an anime fan.

Meanwhile, Manga UK's animation studio rendered stylish comic-inspired animation for U2's *Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, Kill Me* video that tied in with the *Batman Forever* film.

Footage from the horror anime *Monster City* was used in the recent film adaptation of William Gibson's *Johnny Mnemonic*, and a number of split-second clips from anime (including *Vampire Hunter D*, *Akira* and *Zillion* from Streamline Pictures) were seen in the surreal Michael and Janet Jackson video *Scream*.

J.A.I.L.E.D. MAKES ITS FIRST BUST

The Japanese Animation Industry Legal Enforcement Division (J.A.I.L.E.D.) made its first seizure on July 21, according to a release put out by the group. Acting on a seizure order issued by United States District Judge William Knapp, J.A.I.L.E.D. effectively closed down a New York City store, The Karate Center, seizing more than 10,000 counterfeit videos.



The order allowed J.A.I.L.E.D. to take not only titles of the members of the organization, but all other titles from the same bootleg source as well. The amount of material seized took six hours to remove and filled an entire large moving van. Titles found in the store included *Fatal Fury* from Viz, *F3* from AD Vision, *Ninja Scroll* from Manga Entertainment, *Heroic Legend of Arislan* from Central Park Media and countless other anime and Hong Kong titles.

It was noted a few days later at a preliminary injunction hearing that the tapes were put up in black clamshell cases and the cover artwork was simply copies of the original cover art. The court upheld the original broad seizure order.

"The New York seizure sent a clear message to dealers who in the past had ignored copyright infringement laws," said J.A.I.L.E.D. spokesperson Leslie Hyman.

J.A.I.L.E.D.'s hotline number is (800) 917-9799.

NEXT PAGE →

FRAZIER TO JOIN THE JAPAN SOCIETY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Although Scott Frazier has been a guest at the past three Anime Expos (twice as a Guest of Honor), he's not too well known in the U.S. Frazier, however, has had a remarkable career in Japan, moving quickly from an animation school there to working in animation studios like Artland, and eventually running the animation studio TAO in Bangkok, Thailand.

Scott Frazier

Lately, Frazier has been introducing animation studios in Japan to Cambridge Software's Animo system. Animo is a package of computer software that can automate and augment many of the steps of animation, from inbetweening (the drawings between key frames of an animated sequence) to painting, including some stunning transparent effects that would have taken much longer if done by hand.

For his work in bringing this technology to Japanese animation studios, Frazier was invited to join the Japan Society of Image Arts and Sciences, a premiere group of artists, filmakers and animators. Frazier will write for a textbook that will be used in schools teaching animation, and has been interviewed for a "Who's Who" type book.

FUN AND FREE: THE PIONEER ANIMATION CLUB!

Pioneer has brought some tremendously well received anime to America, including the cyberpunkish *Armitage* and the insanely popular *Tenchi Muyo* series. Now, they're bringing American anime fans the Pioneer Animation Club, and its attendant newsletter, *PAC America*.

PAC America will be the official newsletter of Pioneer Entertainment, and will reprint material from Pioneer's Japanese newsletter, *PAC Japan*, including interviews with artists, writers and voice actors, as well as letters and fan art.

To join the Pioneer Animation Club, just send a postcard or letter to: Pioneer Entertainment, P.O. Box 22782, Long Beach, CA 90810, attn: Animation Department. Be sure to include your comments and drawings.

Until next time.

Thanks to all the *Wizard* Manga Scene readers who e-mailed me their thoughts. Keep the e-mail coming to akiyama@cris.com. **W**

Lea Hernandez letters and retouches manga, co-moderates the anime and manga forum for the online service GEnie, and writes and draws comics.

picks of the month

video:
Final Yamato
(Voyager Entertainment, subtitled, 163 minutes, $29.95)

The last movie in the series known as *Star Blazers* in the U.S. has been released to tape in the U.S. and Canada. Like *Speed Racer* and *Astro Boy*, this is the real retro stuff that current thirtysomething's live for. In the late '70s, *Star Blazers* wowed anime fans because, in spite of some name changes, its first two seasons in syndication were well written, well acted and remained true to the sophisticated original storylines. *Final Yamato* includes a 10-minute epilogue that creator Yoshinobu Nishizaki produced as a tribute to the *Yamato* crew, comrades and fans.

If you've been hankering for a fix of *Star Blazers/Yamato*, this is it—and it should hold you until Voyager releases the first of the new *Yamato* movies, the long-awaited *Yamato 2520*, later this year.

manga:
3x3 Eyes *(shown on the right)*
(Dark Horse Comics, five issues, b&w, $2.95. Street date: October 31, 1995)

Following up on the original short run from Innovation Comics, Dark Horse and Studio Proteus have brought back *3x3 Eyes* for another five issues.

In the last series, the immortal girl Pai inadvertently made Japanese student Yakumo immortal as well, inextricably tying his fate to hers. To regain his humanity, Yakumo must help Pai become human.

In this series, "Curse of the Gesu," Yakumo (with Pai in tow), decides to return to his old life in Japan. However, he can't disguise the side-effects of his immortality, or avoid fighting demons, and must return to Pai's (and his) quest in earnest.

Takada's art, when it's not creepy, is charming. The original series did have a couple of gory scenes, so this may not be for the squeamish, but this series is a good adventurous read.

Cards and letters from fans of Yuzko Takada's horror manga helped bring the series back, and a good market response will ensure it continues this time.

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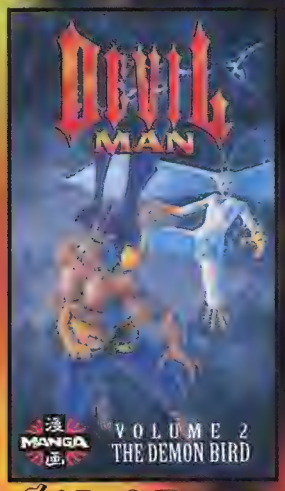

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a look at some cool stuff with an alternative twist

Bringing Life to Comics

Harvey Pekar and Joyce Brabner have used comic books to chronicle the everyday triumphs and challenges of life

"I try to make my stories as accurate as possible," says legendary autobiographical author and *American Splendor* creator Harvey Pekar. "If I'm faced with a situation, I have to decide whether to make myself come across as more or less favorable to readers. I try and opt for being unattractive; that way I'm more believable. I don't really care if people like me; I just want them to like my writing."

Evidently, people do like what Pekar has been writing. His comic series *American Splendor* has been around in various forms since 1972, and he has recently won critical praise—including two 1995 Eisner Award nominations—for his work on *Our Cancer Year*, a graphic novel he co-created with his wife Joyce Brabner and artist Frank Stack. He's recently put together *American Splendor: Windfall*, a new two-issue series from Dark Horse Comics beginning in September, which details Pekar's life after his bout with cancer.

Throughout the years, Pekar has used comic books to chronicle the everyday triumphs and challenges of his life, with stories that range in focus from his job as a file clerk and his obsession with old jazz records to his several unforgettable and controversial appearances on *Late Night with David Letterman*. Pekar's gruff, everyman character celebrates the importance of the personal events that are sometimes taken for granted or forgotten in the hustle and bustle of the modern world.

Pekar says he chose comic books as a medium because of the wide range of possibilities. "When I first started out, I came to the conclusion that comics were as good an artform as any other, and that they were really being underutilized. I saw so many things that could be done in comics that weren't being done. You can deal with any type of a story or issue in comics, just the same way you can in film and TV. You can use the same words that any prose writer can use, and you have access to any number of illustration styles. It's a real economical way of telling a story. You don't have to write descriptive passages; you can just show it to people."

When Pekar shows things to people, he relies on the artists that illustrate his stories. Pekar has worked with a number of artists, and they all have their strong points. "The thing about a few guys I work with, like Robert Crumb, Joe Sacco and Frank Stack, is that they can find a way to do any kind of story. Somebody like Crumb, for example, can find a way to make anything work because he's real smart. He notices all kinds of things: how people dress, what the rooms are furnished with. In that sense, his work is very realistic, even though the proportions of the characters might be exaggerated."

Joyce Brabner, Pekar's wife, also uses comic books to tell true-life stories, but she focuses on stories of social injustice and political activism. She has worked on several high-profile comics, including Eclipse's *Brought to Light* and *Real War Stories* and Caliber/Stabur's *Activists* (which was never distributed, due to its "politically incorrect" nature, as reported in *Wizard* #46's news section), as well as being currently involved in organizing a comic for PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals). With her commitment to using comic books as an educational tool and as a form of journalism, Brabner is one of the few writers in the field who is actively expanding the potential readership of comic books.

Like Pekar, Brabner realizes that the impact of her comics depends on the artists with whom she chooses to work.

Cover art from *American Splendor: Windfall* #1

by tom palmer, jr.

"Sometimes, because of the kind of audience I'm playing to, I'm bridging the gap between comics readers and non-comic readers," she says. "I like to take an artist with a very realistic style and match him with an artist with a very flashy style." She mentions the pairs of Bill Sienkiewicz and Tom Yeates on *Brought to Light*, and Mark Badger and Wayne Van Sant on *Activists* as examples.

While both Pekar and Brabner have written comics on their own for a number of years, they have only recently decided to collaborate. Their first work together was *Our Cancer Year*, a graphic novel that related Pekar's fight with lymphoma, the couple's struggle to buy a house, and Brabner's relationship with a group of young activists during the time of Desert Storm. The graphic novel is a ground-breaking work that stretches the possibilities for the comic book medium, but both Pekar and Brabner agree that working together was a unique, and sometimes difficult, process.

"In the very beginning I wasn't supposed to be working on *Our Cancer Year*, but Harvey had been coming to me with questions and ideas," Brabner remembers. "I began to realize that I was giving him story information, in part because Harvey had suffered some memory loss about what happened. Eventually we realized that we would be working on this thing together."

Pekar recalls that the pair wrote a lot of the work together, but certain scenes were written individually. "There were times when we compromised on things. It wasn't easy to do. If you're working with somebody, and you both have a lot of commitments to what you're doing, and you both have lots of ideas, there are built-in problems. You've got to solve them or else never speak to each other again. But we worked them out."

Brabner acknowledges that while working on the book was difficult, their effort helped them in the healing process. "We were doing what we shouldn't have been doing as cancer survivors. Instead of putting it behind us, we decided to rip it apart. However, it's a lot better for us to look back and see this book instead of just seeing all of the pain Harvey and I went through."

Pekar and Brabner have worked together again more recently on Pekar's new series. All of the stories in *American Splendor: Windfall* are written by Pekar—as was the case with the previous *American Splendor* comics—except for "Be Careful Not to Pull Too Hard on Loose Ends," which was written by Brabner. "I did that story because it gave people an opportunity to see what happened after *Our Cancer Year*, and because it gives you a different point of view on Harvey, which can be really interesting."

While Brabner enjoyed working on *American Splendor*, she acknowledges that there is one drawback to her relationship with her husband. "I'm losing out by being married to Harvey. I don't get to look for the new issue of *American Splendor* and read it. That's something I gave up when I married him."

Tom Palmer Jr. is a freelance writer from New Jersey who doesn't get out much.

FYI

The first issue of *American Splendor: Windfall* should be out now in your local comic book store, or you can call Dark Horse Comics at 1-800-862-0052. The black-and-white series features artwork by Joe Sacco, Frank Stack, Joe Zabel and others. *Our Cancer Year* was published by Four Walls Eight Windows in 1994, and the company also published a trade paperback of earlier *American Splendor* issues.

Recommended Reading

The Book of Ballads and Sagas With more and more self-published comic books popping up every month, it is becoming increasingly difficult to figure out which books will be worth the price of admission. One comic that is sure to be worth every penny is *The Book of Ballads and Sagas*, a six-issue series that is the first venture into self-publishing for popular fantasy artist Charles Vess. In every issue of *Ballads* (see right), Vess has gathered together an impressive list of writers (including Neil Gaiman, Jeff Smith, Elaine Lee and Sharyn McCrumb) to help adapt several popular ballads that have been passed down from generation to generation. Aside from showcasing Vess' ballad adaptations, every issue of this breathtaking, beautiful series will feature an installment of "Skade," a story written by *Ragmop* creator Rob Walton and illustrated by Vess. Just by looking at one page of Vess' vibrant penstrokes from *The Book of Ballads and Sagas*, you can see that he has poured every ounce of love and dedication into this project. If you have trouble finding the first issue (which is in stores in September), send $3.50 to Green Man Press, 10518 Rich Valley Rd, Bristol, VA 24202 for a sample.

Schizo Ivan Brunetti is a wickedly humorous cartoonist with a tremendous self-deprecating streak. Check out Fantagraphics' re-release of Brunetti's *Schizo*, which was originally published by Antarctic Press. Write to Fantagraphics at 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115 or call 1-800-657-1100 for more information.

Wizard & Marvel Comics Present:

THE GHOST RIDER MOTORCYCLE CONTEST

A CHANCE TO WIN THE Hottest CONTEST YET!

At comic conventions everywhere, Marvel has featured an amazing Ghost Rider motorcycle hand-painted by artist Bill Sienkiewicz. Now Marvel wants you to get in on the fun. Here's what you gotta do:

Draw Tippy and win a prize!

This month's contest is sponsored by those great guys at MARVEL COMICS

HOW TO PLAY

On a piece of paper or posterboard no bigger than 8 1/2"-by-11", draw (or describe in words) what you think Ghost Rider's motorcycle should look like. And remember, no neon inks!
If your entry is good enough (which means really original and cool-looking), you could win one of these prizes:

Grand Prize (1):

One winner will get a giant-sized poster of the Ghost Rider Harley-Davidson motorcycle, signed by the legendary Bill Sienkiewicz himself! And he even knows how to spell his own name correctly!

First Prize (1):

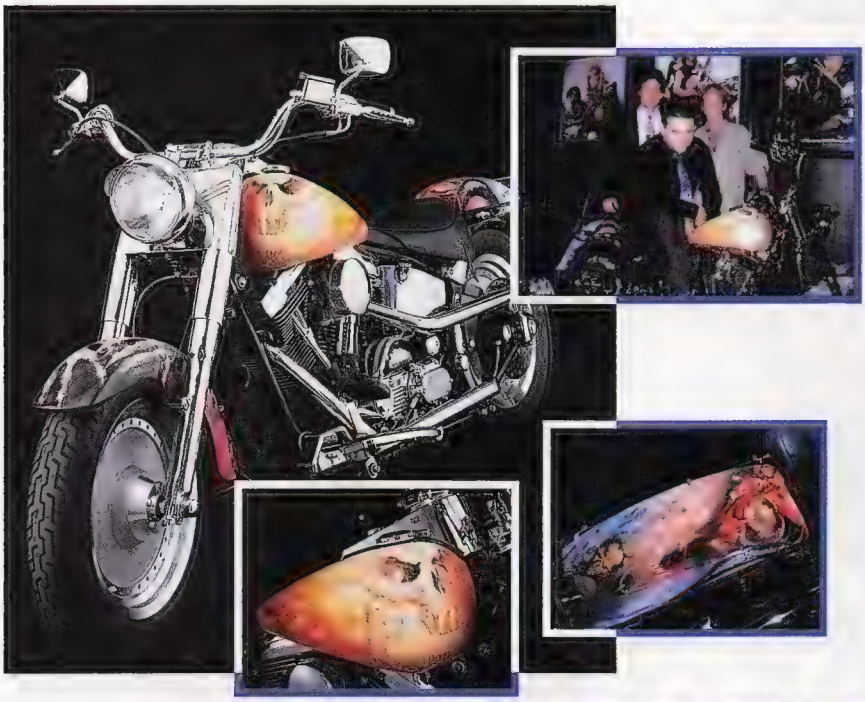
One winner will receive all seven 5" Toy Biz Ghost Rider action figures.

Second Prize (1):

One winner will receive all three 10" Toy Biz Ghost Rider action figures.

And just 'cause we're so swell:

All entries will be put into a drawing to win one of 30 Toy Biz Stunt Cycles with either Ghost Rider, Blaze or Vengeance!



Hot Legal Hooey

(WE'D CATCH HELLFIRE IF WE DIDN'T PRINT IT!)

All entries must be received by November 30, 1995. Limit one entry per envelope. No purchase necessary. Print your name, age, address, city, state, zip code, date of birth and your telephone number with area code on the official entry form or a 3-by-5 inch index card and attach the form or card to the back of your entry. Contest open to U.S. residents only. Employees and their families of Marvel Entertainment Group, Wizard Press, Toy Biz Inc., their affiliates, subsidiaries and their advertising and promotional agencies are not eligible. All entrants grant to the sponsors permission to use their names and likenesses in advertising and promotion for the contest. By entering the contest, each entrant acknowledges and agrees that his/her entries and all rights of copyright contained therein shall be automatically and immediately assigned to Marvel and shall become the sole and exclusive property of *Wizard* and will not be returned. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. Winners will be chosen on or about December 15, 1995. Winners will be notified by telephone and/or mail. Prizes are not redeemable for cash or substitutable for any other item. Marvel reserves the right to substitute a prize of like or greater value for any prize, for any reason. The prizes will be awarded in the names of the contest winners and are not transferable. To receive a prize, each winner may be required to execute a release of prize liability/prize acceptance form. One prize per person. Offer void where prohibited by law. Marvel Entertainment Group, Toy Biz Inc. and Wizard Press are not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries. Odds of winning will be determined by number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. Winners will be selected by the staff of Marvel Comics from finalists selected by the *Wizard* staff based on quality and originality. The winners list will be available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Winners List, Ghost Rider Motorcycle Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118. Winners shall be responsible for all applicable taxes. Contest sponsored by Marvel Entertainment, Inc., Toy Biz, Inc. and Wizard Press. Ghost Rider ™ & © 1995 Marvel Entertainment Group, Inc. All rights reserved.

DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 30, 1995!

Fill the form out, attach it to your entry, put it all in an envelope (mail it flat so it doesn't get ruined) and send it to: Marvel Ghost Rider Motorcycle Contest, c/o Wizard Press, P.O. Box 118, Congers, NY 10920-0118.

Official Ghost Rider Entry Form

Name

Date of Birth

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone Number (with area code)

DID YOU ATTACH YOUR MOTORCYCLE ENTRY TO THIS FORM?

POWER UP!

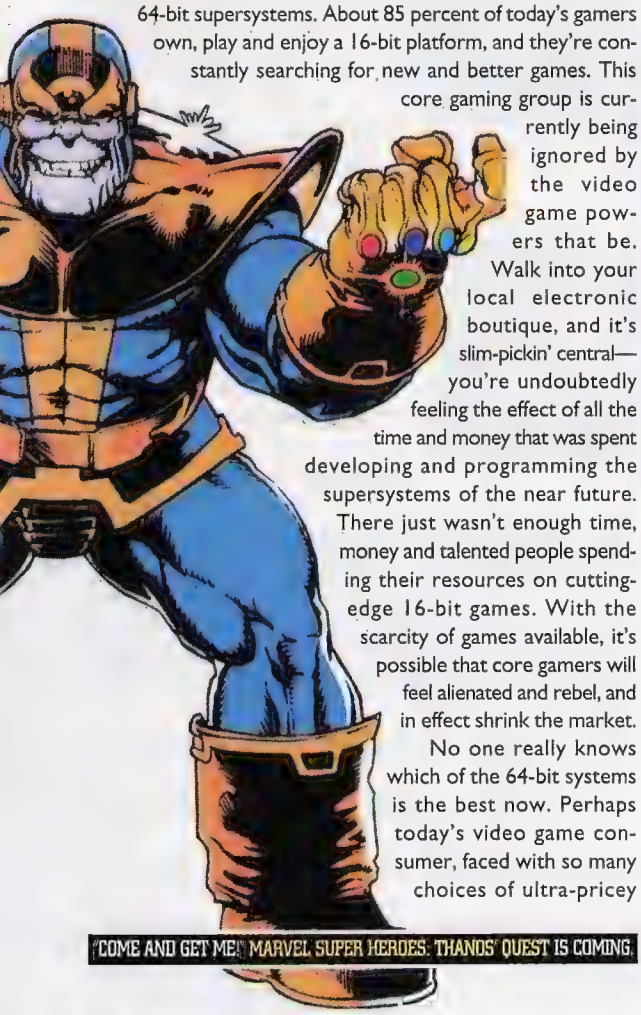
By Steve Brown

Many Changes, Many Choices

The video game market is in the midst of its most expansive metamorphosis ever. The huge 16-bit market is being left behind in favor of more lucrative, higher gross-profit CD-ROM 32- and 64-bit supersystems. About 85 percent of today's gamers own, play and enjoy a 16-bit platform, and they're constantly searching for new and better games. This core gaming group is currently being ignored by the video game powers that be. Walk into your local electronic boutique, and it's slim-pickin' central—you're undoubtedly feeling the effect of all the time and money that was spent developing and programming the supersystems of the near future. There just wasn't enough time, money and talented people spending their resources on cutting-edge 16-bit games. With the scarcity of games available, it's possible that core gamers will feel alienated and rebel, and in effect shrink the market.

No one really knows which of the 64-bit systems is the best now. Perhaps today's video game consumer, faced with so many choices of ultra-pricey 64-bit platforms, will make the simplest choice of all and not buy any of them.

On that note, on to the news.



COME AND GET ME! MARVEL SUPER HEROES: THANOS' QUEST IS COMING.

Star Wars Update

Star Wars: Shadows of the Empire games are in the works for all systems. In case you haven't heard, *Shadows* will feature new *Star Wars* stories taking place in actual *Star Wars* continuity, which lies somewhere between the movies and the comic books. These games, stories and Dark Horse comics will involve all the bounty hunter types...including the greatest scoundrel of all, Boba Fett.

Thanos vs. the Marvel Universe

Just beating our press deadline, Capcom announced a new SNES game, *Marvel Super Heroes: Thanos' Quest*. *Thanos' Quest* will feature characters such as Spider-Man, Wolverine, Iron Man, Captain America, the Hulk and a host of other heroes and villains in a side-scrolling fighting adventure. Players can choose their fave hero to battle against evil. *Thanos' Quest* is in development for early '96.

Bits and Bytes

Playmates Interactive's *WildC.A.T.s* for SNES and Sega Genesis has been delayed until November, which probably means the game starring the Image heroes has problems and has to be reworked....*Spider-Man: Web of Fire*, is slated for this fall for the 32X. New York is being reduced to rubble as an incredible energy net slowly turns the Big Apple into applesauce. According to Sega, this game will feature mesmerizing 3-D-rendered, motion-captured animation and graphics. Due to the current Scarlet Spider storyline, however, this game may not be released, so that Spider-fans aren't confused. Either way, Playmates Interactive has a slew of other promising titles slated....Playmates Interactive's *Earthworm Jim 2*, for SNES and Genesis, hits stores in October. The cool thing is Playmates has plans to upgrade E2 and place souped-up versions in the stores by Christmas for the Saturn and Sony PlayStation. W

AN EARTHWORM JIM SEQUEL LANDS IN OCTOBER.

Steve Brown likes to play with Cabbage Patch Kids dolls and eats Oreo Granola Bars at 2 a.m.

Reviews

PRIMAL RAGE
(by Time-Warner for the Sega Genesis)

I have to admit to enjoying the arcade version of this game, not for the gameplay, but for the combo of fantastic graphics and bloodletting. When I received the *Primal Rage* E-Proms (pre-release versions of games), before I even played them I knew I'd be pleased if the graphics would translate at all into 16-bit. I am sad to say, they don't—they're muddy and too small. The two-player option was a blast—a lot more fun than most—due to the wacky dino-victory shuffles. A near-miss that I can't recommend as a purchase, this will make a great rental. However, the hand-held portable versions for the Game Gear and Game Boy are very cool, considering the inherent limitations of the systems. Both feature top-notch graphics, but no two-player head-to-head action.

LET'S DO THE CHA-CHA!

PHANTOM 2040 *(by Viacom for the Sega Genesis)*

If you've read my columns in the past, you know that I hold the side-scrolling genre with much disdain. *Phantom 2040* is yet another shoot-and-run sim. However, unlike most, *Phantom 2040* has a definite personality—your character behaves and feels like his cartoon counterpart. This game is hard, yet fairly straightforward: You kill everything to get to the boss and continue on. The variety of weapon pick-ups breaks up the usual monotony. I had a good time, even though I am not a huge fan of the animated series. Viacom deserves credit for maxxing out the potential of a side-scroller, with solid gameplay and stunning graphics...a real winner.

CASINO FUNPACK *(by Interplay for the Game Gear)*

Today's portables will soon be rendered obsolete by the oft-delayed hand-held Genesis due out in spring '96. The portables we have now are some of the most underrated forms of video game entertainment. *Casino Funpack* is a great airplane, bus station and, of course, at-work timewaster. The graphics really surprised me, as did the fundamentally sound gambling. Slots, video poker, craps, roulette and blackjack are conveniently at your fingertips.

A ROYAL FLUSH!

DEMOLITION MAN *(by Acclaim for the SNES)*

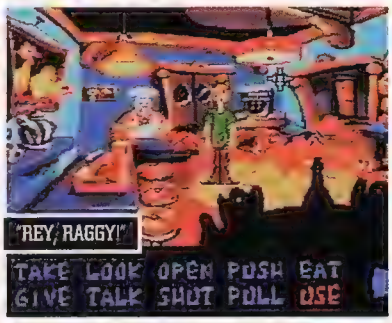
Part side-scroller, part 360-degree overhead perspective and all boring. I swear this is the same game as Acclaim's earlier misfire *Judge Dredd*. The only difference is Stallone gets to bungee jump off a helicopter in this one. I think the unwritten rule of video gaming is if it has Stallone in it, don't buy it, because after Acclaim pays the enormous licensing fee for his film, there isn't any money left to program a decent sim. Rent it and maybe you will appreciate the mounting carnage and orgy of weapons.

THE DRAGON *(by Acclaim for the SNES)*

Bruce Lee is back from the grave. Not only because he stars in Acclaim's new fight game, but because he is going to hunt down the designers of this totally lame game and pummel them so bad they can't desecrate his memory any further. This fight game is worse than the Shaquille O'Neal-inspired fighting game *Shaq Fu*...'nuff said.

SCOOBY DOO MYSTERIES
(by Sunsoft/Acclaim for Sega Genesis)

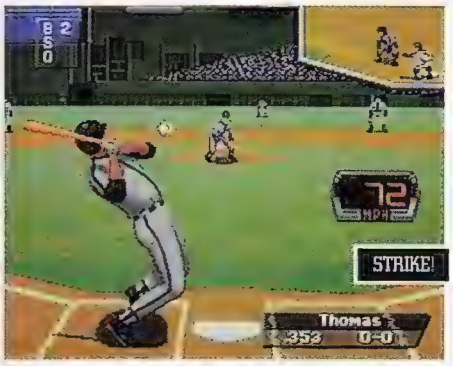
Scooby Doo is not a fighting game, nor is it a side-scroller. I'm actually not sure *what* it is, but I kinda liked it. The object of the game is to interact with your surroundings and solve puzzles that eventually lead to the unmasking of some costumed criminal. It took a while to get used to a game that no one dies in, and in which no weapons are discharged. The Hanna-Barbera animation is great, as are the near-perfect sound effects. Be prepared for a thinking game and harmless fun. Most kids won't have the patience for it, and that is as sad as it is telling.



"HEY, RAGGY!"

TRIPLE PLAY BASEBALL
(by Electronic Arts for the Sega Genesis)

EA has mastered every sport sim, but always came up short in the baseball department—until now. *Triple Play* is awesome, and if you are into video baseball, this is a must-have. My favorite feature is the create your own player one: The attributes are randomly generated, but create Babe Ruth and see what happens. You can even use your creations in full-season play against all the other teams. Easy to learn, hard to master. Those are the ingredients to gaming success.



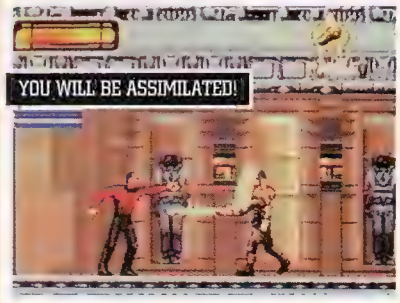
STRIKE!

EARTHWORM JIM *(by Playmates)* and DONKEY KONG LAND *(by Nintendo); both for the Game Boy*

Essentially the same games graphically, these two are loyal adaptations and worth picking up. If you prefer violence and gunplay, *Earthworm Jim* will work for you. It is hard to believe how good these games look and play, but if you're still playing a Game Boy over the superior Game Gear, graphics are not really a priority. Both feature many levels and difficult gameplay.

STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE *(by Playmates for the Sega Genesis)*

This game has been getting a bad rap by the other gaming mags. They say it is slow, boring and laid-back, but I found the so-called flaws interesting. All the crew members are here, but you control Sisko for the most part. As in *Scooby Doo*, you must interact with the denizens of the space station and solve the various missions. The first mission can get repetitive, but once you get the controls and interface down, you'll be past that part in no time. If you're a fan of the television series or into brainier games, then this is a game for you. ●


YOU WILL BE ASSIMILATED!

All artwork, games and characters are ™ & © their respective owners

***Wizard*, by staying in touch with hundreds of retailers throughout the country, keeps a close eye on the country's hottest back issues. Here are September's hottest back issues.**

Top 10 Comics

NUMBER ONE

1. GEN[13] #1 VARIANTS (ongoing series)

WRITER: Brandon Choi ARTISTS: J. Scott Campbell and Alex Garner

"Top ten Gen[13] Comics"? Nah. "J. Scott Campbell presents"? Mmm...no. "The Gen Ten, full o' estro-gen"? No, that'll never do. We guess we'll just stick to calling this the Top Ten Comics, even though them Gen[13] guys are always hoggin' the number one slot. S'funny, though, that even though the new series with its 13 (!) variant covers is kickin' butt on the charts, the original mini-series that kicked this whole Gen-craze off is nowhere to be found. Regardless, the fun writing style and grade-A art of this series has made it a solid fan-favorite.

NUMBER TWO

2. X-MEN PRIME #1

WRITERS: Scott Lobdell and Fabian Nicieza ARTISTS: More artists than you can stake an apocalyptic alternate reality at

The X-Men vs. Prime? Neat. Betcha we see Rogue slug Prime in the gut, popping his outer body and coating everybody in Jell-O. Then Psylocke would go to help Rogue up, and they'd both slip and fall down and start wrestling in the Jell-O, and then it would start to get hot, so naturally they'd take off...what? Prime's not in this? This is where the X-Men return from that Age of Apocalypse thing into our own reality? Not half as exciting, though this book has the evil Cookie Monster-lookin' Beast hop over to this dimension to cause some mischief, so it's not so bad.

3. X-FILES #1

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha
ARTIST: Charles Adlard

How the hell are Scully and Mulder still alive? They are, like, the two most inept agents we've ever seen, and take more of a pounding every issue than your average pro wrestling referee. We dig 'em, but c'mon, go catch Bigfoot or something already. Anyways, this here issue continues to be a hot commodity, seeing as how the TV show has a HUGE following. Plus, with a recent five-page story in *TV Guide* (which has a circulation of roughly seven gajillion), more people are now aware of this conspiracy-driven comic.

NUMBER THREE

NUMBER FOUR

4. [illegible] #1

WRITERS: W. Tucci and P. Gutierrez
ARTISTS: W. Tucci and H. Mercadoocasio

Hey, kids, wanna have some fun? Grab the names William Tucci, Peter Gutierrez and Harvey Mercadoocasio, and in two minutes, see how many words you can come up with using the letters in all of 'em. Ready? Go! (For bonus points, try making only nine-letters-or-more words like marshmallow, diversity, powerhouse, guacamole or Palmiotti.) Wow, that tangent took up almost all of the space we needed to fill this month. All we gotta do now is comment on the spiffy art and keen-o writin' in this top-selling book and bam, we're on to the next entry.

5. LADY DEATH #1

WRITER: Brian Pulido
ARTIST: Steven Hughes

Just when you think they've milked this one to death (ba da bump), something funky and new comes out from those folks over at Chaos! and Lady Death is hot again. Yeah, she slipped a bit this month in the charts, but she's still pretty gosh-darn popular. With the newest Evil Ernie mini-series hittin' the stands this month and her own *The Odyssey* mini-series coming later on in the year (which'll picture her in 3-D!! Or is that 36-D?), Ms. Death's exposure will be far from limited. Which really is not a bad thing.

6. DOUBLE IMPACT #1

WRITER: Ricky Carralero
ARTIST: Ricky Carralero

Wow. This book has an even worse logo than *Shi*, seeing as how it doesn't even have one...what? It's on the back? Ah. Boy, what gimmick will these comic companies think of next? Oh, wait, we know. It'll be women...scantily clad...giant gazoongas...Oh boy, can't wait. Anyway, the very shiny *Double Impact* here tells the tale of China and Jazz (the Autobot?), two special agents (like Scully and Mulder, but with implants) who were double-crossed by the government. The agent who asked 'em to come "back to work" in this issue should count his days...

7. ASH #1

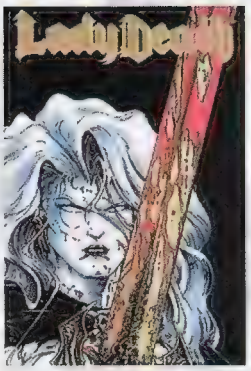
WRITERS: Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti
ARTISTS: Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti

What were we saying about bad logos? Anyway, the tag-team tandem of Quesada and Palmiotti have a slow-burning hit on their hands with Ashley Quinn, better known to the masses as Ash. The storyline revolves around Mr. Quinn, a fireman, who finds himself possessing pyrotechnic powers, and decides to do what most nice people with superpowers do in comics: become a superhero. Of course, his friends and fellow firemen are slowly finding out about him, making for some interesting plotlines. Neat stuff, great art and worth checking out.

8. SHI #2

WRITERS: W. Tucci and P. Gutierrez
ARTISTS: W. Tucci and M. Blair with Nelson Asencio

Apocalyptic, hypercritical, domesticity, sympathetic, Pat McCallum. Boy, that's fun. Anyway, for those of you who can't get enough of the lovely Ana Ishikawa (that's Shi, guys and gals), check out the *Twelve Deadly Months of Shi 1996 Calendar*, on sale in October. It'll sport all-new art pieces by Tucci, who says, "It's not only a calendar with gorgeous art, but it has a little something extra: historical text for the dates, including both non-fictional material—like Japanese history—and fictional, like Ana and Tomoe's birthdays." Who else but the Tooch could produce something as cool as this?

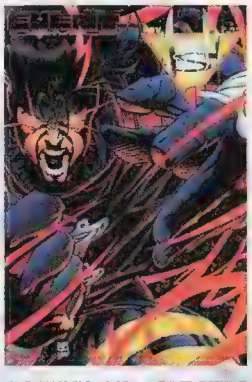


NUMBER FIVE

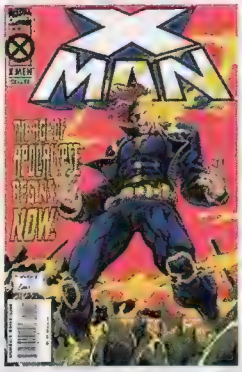
NUMBER EIGHT

NUMBER SIX

NUMBER NINE



NUMBER SEVEN



NUMBER TEN

9. X-FILES #2

WRITER: Stefan Petrucha
ARTIST: Charles Adlard

What would you rather be: tied up and zapped by electrodes like Han Solo in *The Empire Strikes Back* or tied down and have a needle jammed in your eye like that guy from *Fire in the Sky*? Either way, them alien types are unpleasant bastards, and it's a good thing we got us weird-stuff investigators like Scully and Mulder to kick alien butt. Even if they never really kick butt. Or can prove they found anything. Or get any answers. Hey! These two slackers are gettin' paid with our tax dollars and they don't do squat! Somebody call Kolchak!

10. X-MAN #1

WRITER: Jeph Loeb
ARTISTS: Steve Skroce with inkers Sellers, Smith, LaRosa and Conrad

Let's see...Nathan Summers is the son of Scott Summers and Madelyne Pryor (who was an evil clone of Jean Grey). He was taken into the future and returned a grown man called Cable. His clone also returned from the future and took the name Stryfe. Stryfe just dang blowed up and Cable shaved his goatee. Then an alternate reality Nathan Summers shows up from that "Age of Apocalypse" business and takes up residence here. OK, got it.

THE NEXT TEN

The next 10 hot books and the companies that make them

11. SPAWN MAXX #1 IMAGE
12. AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #400 MARVEL
13. X-MEN: ALPHA MARVEL
14. AVENGELYNE #1 MAX. PRESS
15. LADY DEATH #2 CHAOS!
16. SHI (mini-series) #1 IMAGE
17. LADY DEATH: C.M.A.R. #1 CHAOS!
18. GENERATION X #1 MARVEL
19. [illegible] #1 IMAGE
20. SHI (mini-series) #2 IMAGE

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH...

AN EXTREME™ STUDIOS & WILDSTORM™ PRODUCTIONS PRODUCTION

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COMIC WATCH

The Sandman (vol. 2) #69

WRITER: **NEIL GAIMAN**
ARTISTS: **MARC HEMPEL & RICHARD CASE**
PUBLISHER: **DC COMICS/VERTIGO**
RELEASE DATE: **JULY 1995**

After our favorite white-skinned ruler left this plane of existence, Daniel (the son of one of the women who brought about Morpheus' demise) became the new Dreamdweller at this issue's end. It's just as we predicted when we spotlighted young Daniel's *Sandman* #22 debut in *Wizard* #29's Comic Watch, and that tons of readers expected as the year-long "The Kindly Ones" story raged on. Now all of us'll wait and see if this important issue will become as kindly to collectors as we think it will.

The Uncanny X-Men #129

WRITERS: **CHRIS CLAREMONT & JOHN BYRNE**
ARTISTS: **JOHN BYRNE & TERRY AUSTIN**
PUBLISHER: **MARVEL**
RELEASE DATE: **JANUARY 1980**

Our first peek at the White Queen, the ex-X-Men villainess, came in *Uncanny X-Men* #129, where Emma Frost first appeared in all her cape-and-corset glory. This "nice-lookin' frail," as Wolverine initially called her, proceeded to besiege loads of hardship on the X-Men for years as part of the always unpleasant Hellfire Club. Now, however, she co-runs the new Xavier School with fellow mutant Banshee, as related in *Generation X*. And if that ain't enough for ya, Kitty Pryde makes her first appearance in this ish as well! (Remember her? Thought not. Nobody reads *Excalibur*.) **W**

GOOD&CHEAP

by Andrew Kardon

Doctor Strange (vol. 2) #56

WRITER: **ROGER STERN**
ARTISTS: **PAUL SMITH & TERRY AUSTIN**
CURRENT VALUE: **$2**

Ya gotta admit, Dr. Strange has always been one o' the coolest-lookin' heroes around. With that levitating cloak and the Eye of Agamanamanamoma…er, that eye thingie, he just looks friggin' cool!

Most of you've probably only seen him floatin' around in *The Defenders* (c'mon, you can admit to reading it) or guest-starring on the *Spider-Man and his Amazing Friends* show. Well, if that's the case, then this here issue's the perfect one for you to pick up. Besides having some awesome art by Paul Smith and Terry Austin, there's also a great little yarn spun by that Roger Stern fella.

The story takes place in Strange's Greenwich Village mansion, where the Sorcerer Supreme is interviewed by his cute li'l reporter friend Morgana Blessing and a few other newshounds. The Doc tells 'em all his entire origin and you get to see just how he got all his neato powers. But following his tale, Dr. Strange quickly sees through the newshounds' ruse and reveals them for the slimy demons they are. The rest of the issue centers on these creeps tryin' to take down Strange in his own home! Far from the wisest of moves. **W**

PICKS

a listing of the hottest books as selected by the WIZARD staff, shipping in October

ULTRAVERSE REBOOT

Writers: Various
Artists: Various
Release Dates: throughout October
Cover Prices: $1.50 each! Woo-hoo!

MALIBU The Ultraverse blasts out of its "Black September" event with new titles, a new low price and seven #1 issues. "We aren't ignoring the past," editor Hank Kanalz stresses. "We're using it as a strong foundation for change."

In *UltraForce* #1, for instance, the team gains two members new to the Ultraverse: Wreckage, whose powers remain under wraps, and Lament, a Native American woman with an intuitive rapport with technology. They join Prime, Ghoul, Topaz, the Black Knight and Prototype—but one of these familiar characters will be unlike anything we've seen before, Kanalz says. The first three-issue arc, he adds, involves a UF member who murders someone. "The book will have a darker tone, but it will have a lighter side to it, too."

Exiles returns with a decided X-flavor, as Juggernaut arrives in the Ultraverse to lead a combination of mutants and ultras. Sienna Blaze and Reaper join Shuriken, Amber Hunt and the Strike on the new team. Meanwhile, in *Siren* #1, the former UltraForce heroine shifts to the Marvel Universe, where she must assassinate War Machine!

Two well-known ultras reboot this month, as well, with *Prime* #1 and *The Night Man* #1. Prime discovers, while in his Spider-Prime mode, that someone has taken over his Prime body. The story leads up to a major confrontation that decides who will be the real Prime—but Kanalz swears there are no clones involved! Meanwhile, The Night Man receives a more mystical, cutting-edge look, thanks to the earlier manipulations of Loki during the battle for the Infinity Gem.

Speaking of those gems, their ex-holder Adam Warlock visits the Ultraverse in *Rune* #1, while Rune battles Annihilus in the Negative Zone. And in *Mantra* #1, a female warrior's spirit becomes trapped in a teenage girl's body, creating an all-new Mantra! But where is Eden Blake? Answers to these questions and more begin here this month!

—Craig Shutt

AMAZING FANTASY #16

Writer: Kurt Busiek
Artist: Paul Lee
Release Date: October 3
Cover Price: $3.95

MARVEL It seems natural for the writer of *The Untold Tales of Spider-Man*, which tells of his early years, to fill in the blanks between Spidey's first appearance in *Amazing Fantasy* #15 and his second in *Amazing Spider-Man* #1. But did that much really happen?

"Absolutely," says writer Kurt Busiek, the man behind *Marvels* and Image Comics' *Astro City*. "In *AF* #15, Peter is a scared kid with powers that he'd used to become a TV celebrity. He'd done one superheroic deed and learned a powerful lesson from that experience. But in *Amazing Spider-Man* #1, he's cocky and confident enough to join the Fantastic Four—at their top salary—and he's famous enough for J. Jonah Jameson to be inveighing against him."

This three-issue series, which also includes *Amazing Fantasy* #17 and #18, fills in that evolutionary gap, featuring painted interiors by Paul Lee, who did the cover to the *Spider-Man: Invasion of the Spider Slayers* paperback. Each issue offers a stand-alone story but includes subplots and developments that build throughout the series. Busiek centers each story on a different theme: Family (how Peter becomes the man of the house and learns the extent of his new powers); friends (why Peter hangs around with kids who hate him); and fame (how Spidey's agent, Maxie Shiffman, impacts his development). Jump on the Busiek bandwagon now!

—CS

VAMPIRELLA STRIKES #1

Writer: Tom Sniegoski
Artists: Ed McGuinness & Nathan Massengill
Release Date: October 5
Cover Price: $2.95

HARRIS Vampirella fans are about to double their pleasure as Harris Comics introduces a second ongoing book chronicling new adventures of everyone's favorite female bloodsucker. This bimonthly book will alternate months with the *Vampirella Classic* reprint title.

The comic will be unlike either of the other Vampi books, says editor Meloney Crawford Chadwick. It will focus on team-ups, "What If?" stories, and other stand-alone concepts. "It's a great starting point for readers new to Vampirella's world," she says. "It offers creators a chance to tell stories about Vampirella without being tied to continuity in the regular book, and we have many who are eager to join in."

Although most issues will feature complete stories, the first adventure is a two-issue arc rematching Vampi and Passion. Dante Corp. manipulates Passion into helping them find a portal into another world. It's up to Vampirella to stop them and the werewolf-demons known as The Slash and their Slash Queen.

Writer Tom Sniegoski will be followed by vampire novelist Chris Golden on issue #3. It features Facelift, an immortal changeling, and leads into the character's four-part mini-series scheduled for early next year. David Quinn will pen issue #4. "This book will be kind of like lightning," says Chadwick. "It'll be striking here, there and everywhere."

—CS

RIPCLAW #1

Writers: Dave Wohl & Brian Haberlin
Artists: Anthony Winn & Jason Gorder
Release Date: October
Cover Price: $2.50

IMAGE The ongoing *Ripclaw* series will serve as a sort of gateway for introducing a variety of mystical and magical forces into the Top Cow Universe, says writer Dave Wohl. In the first three-issue arc, for instance, "Ripclaw discovers that he knows very little about the mystical forces surrounding him."

That's made clear when he meets a band of evil magic guilds. They've joined to try to gain access to another dimension, where magical elves exiled themselves when they were forced from Earth. Ripclaw becomes enmeshed with them as well as the Darlings, who live beneath Manhattan and immerse him in their magical teachings so he can battle the guilds.

The story also will introduce two new magical characters, a male/female team, who will receive their own ongoing series in the aftermath of an Image mega-crossover planned for 1996's first quarter, Wohl reveals. Also early in the year, Top Cow will be introducing a book called *The Darkness*, which focuses on the magical elements of the universe. It begins with a mini-series that leads into an ongoing book.

And what of Ripclaw's best buds from Cyberforce? At least one team member guest-stars by issue #3, but Wohl is remaining mum on which one it will be...at least for now. We'll keep you posted.

—CS

BART SIMPSON'S TREEHOUSE OF HORROR #1

Writers: Mike Allred, James Robinson & Jeff Smith
Artist: Bill Morrison
Release Date: October 5
Cover Price: $2.95

BONGO COMICS Putting the Simpsons' annual Halloween television show into a comic book isn't easy, but Bongo dug up just the right creepy creators to do the job! Three of today's top comics writers team with artist Bill Morrison to present stories that deserve their place of honor in Bart's treetop terror suite.

James Robinson (*Starman*) contributes "Bart People," his version of the 1943 movie *Cat People*. Mike Allred (*Madman*) offers up a scary rendition of the "Little Shop of Homers." And Jeff Smith (*Bone*) spins a yarn based on his favorite white whale, entitled "Call Me Homer." A few surprise guest artists will be stopping by to ink some of the pages too, notes Jason Grode, Bongo's managing editor.

The book also picks up other traditions from the TV episodes, including the really strange tombstones and those wacky, globular aliens, Kang and Kodos. Some of these additional pages in the 48-page one-shot will be contributed by Matt Groening, the man to blame for Bart and the gang. The cover on this annual event will be fully painted by Morrison.

"Fans of the TV show will pick up the TV references, but this is going to be fun for straight comics fans, too," says Grode. "They'll get to see how some of their favorite comics creators handle the Simpsons characters."

—CS

MORE PICKS

The following pages list the peachiest titles shipping in October, as selected and written by the *Wizard* staff.

AVENGERS #393

MARVEL Apparently, some "original Avenger" has gone and offed another fellow Avenger. So, this issue sees the current team searching for clues to the death of their teammate. Where do they look? Why, in the Antarctic bunker of a certain Mr. Tony "Um, why're you all lookin' at me like that?" Stark. By Bob Harras, Mike Deodato Jr. and Tom Palmer. **$1.50**

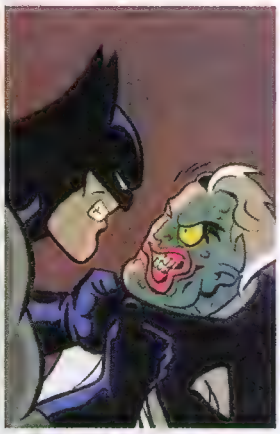
THE BATMAN AND ROBIN ADVENTURES #2

DC COMICS Uh oh, Two-Face thinks Bruce Wayne stole his fiancée. So, to get revenge on his former friend, Mr. Face busts out of Arkham and kidnaps one Dick Grayson. Heh, real slick, there, buddy! And what's with these revolving doors at Arkham? We remember one episode of *Batman: The Animated Series* where they had this really tough security guard who kept all the prisoners in line by slapping 'em around a bit. That's what Arkham needs! By Paul Dini, Ty Templeton and Rick Burchett. Dini says, "This is the wrap-up of a story we debated as a popular candidate for the animated movie. We decided to go with the Phantasm idea for the feature, but I've always had a fondness for this one. I decided to dust it off and use it in the comic book, as we had stopped production on the cartoon series. It's also unique because instead of Two-Face versus Batman, it's Two-Face versus Bruce Wayne. It kind of redefines their relationship." **$1.75**

BATMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS Hey, it's the Year of the Bat! Well, it's actually the Year of the Pig. Same thing. Celebrate by picking up *Batman* #525, where the Dark Knight takes on the "Underworlded" Mr. Freeze (Easily the best villain on the animated series!), who's out to ice alla Gotham! After you've cooled off, check out *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* #45 and see what Alfred's dug up in the basement: hundreds of old *Playboys*! Boy, is Tim gonna have a lot of explaining to do. Oh yeah, he finds a 100-year-old corpse too. Hmm... Once that mystery's solved, go read *Detective Comics* #692 and see Batman and Robin go nose-to-nose with the new supercharged, revved-up Spellbinder. But heck, that's nuthin', 'cause poor ol' Nightwing's gotta deal with a deathtrap fulla nasty li'l rats, overthrow some psycho's murderous outings, finally learn the truth about his parents' untimely death and rescue his babe from her abusive dad. It all happens in *Nightwing* #4 (of 4)! And to round off your Bat-month, pick up *Batman: Man-Bat* #3 (of 3). In this series' conclusion, Batman must stop Langstrom from fulfilling his destiny of creating a whole new species of man-bats, and wiping humanity off the Earth! (Geez—hey, Langstrom, just get like, a hobby or something.) **$1.95 EACH; $2.25—*NIGHTWING*; $4.95—*MAN-BAT***

AVENGERS #393



THE BATMAN AND ROBIN ADVENTURES #2

BATMAN: GHOSTS

BATMAN: MAN-BAT #3

BATMAN: GHOSTS—A LEGENDS OF THE DARK KNIGHT HALLOWEEN SPECIAL

DC COMICS Jeez, how many freakin' books does this Batguy have?!? This year's special takes you inside Batman's tortured mind, where he's visited by four spirits: the Ghosts of Halloween Past (a.k.a. Poison Ivy), Present (a.k.a. The Joker), Future (go read the book if you wanna know who this guy is) and Thomas Wayne. (Hopefully he's cleaned himself up a bit. Last we saw, he was riddled with bullets.) By Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale. **$4.95**

BONE #21

IMAGE In *Bone*'s first Image issue, Fone Bone straps on some pouches, grabs the biggest friggin' gun he can find and goes huntin' for some Daemonite ass. That'd be great. Actually, Fone Bone, Gran'ma Ben and the rest o' the freaks finally get it on with those stupid, stupid rat creatures in an all-out confrontation! Plus, learn Phoney's latest scam. By Jeff "Yes, that's a Bone in my pocket and I *am* happy to see you!" Smith. **$2.95**

CAPTAIN AMERICA #446

MARVEL Oh, this is painful to write. It's gotta be a hoax. Y'see, Cap's now back to his full fightin' strength, but apparently, someone's caught him on film helping out the Red Skull. Tell us it's all part of the plan, Cap. Don't let all your faithful followers down! Sniff... By Mark Waid and Ron Garney. **$1.50**

MORE PICKS

CYBERFORCE #17

IMAGE After maxxin' and relaxin', Cyberforce is rarin' to get back into the action! The team regroups and prepares for the future. And wait'll ya see the new villain they encounter. Let's just say, "Evil is as evil does!" By Brian Haberlin and David Finch. **$2.25**

DAREDEVIL #347

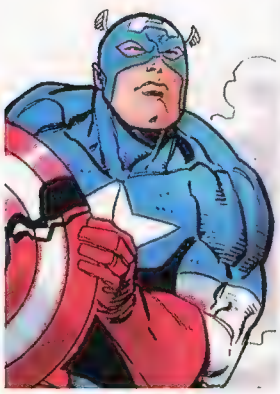
MARVEL Now here's a book that sucked eggs a long time ago, rose to awesome heights under some Miller guy, and then dropped to suckin' eggs again. But now, there seems to be some neat stuff goin' on! This issue sees the mysterious yellow-and-black-costumed Daredevil (Our guess is this guy's really Bullseye) going fist-to-fist with the red-suited DD in a no-holds-barred battle! By J.M. DeMatteis, Ron Wagner and Bill Reinhold. DeMatteis says, "This issue takes the threads of the two Daredevils running around the city and boils it all to a climax. There've been a lot of things brewing in Daredevil's unconscious—a lot of doors opening up on things he's not quite ready to face. This is the issue where all the demons come out of the box and he has to face everything and make a choice here: either allow himself to be consumed by these demons or take the leap and transcend them and move on to the next level." **$1.95**

DOOMSDAY ANNUAL #1

DC COMICS Hey, isn't that guy dead or something? Well, yeah, but Doomsday's got that special power thingie where he returns after every mortal defeat. That bein' the case, ya get four, not one, not two, but *four* "Year One" stories about "The Guy Who Offed Superman!" A whole horde o' creators are on board this ish, including Dan Jurgens, Jerry Ordway, Louise Simonson, Roger Stern, Gil Kane and like 86,000 others! **$3.95**

EVIL ERNIE: STRAIGHT TO HELL #1 (of 5)

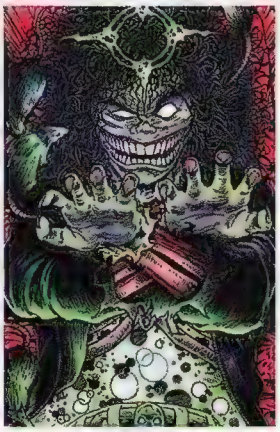
CHAOS! COMICS Poor Ernie. First Mr. Hooper dies, then that stupid Elmo freak shows up and steals Grover's thunder. Oh, wait, this is *Evil* Ernie. Sorry. Seems that bein' apart from Lady Death for months is driving Ernie absolutely nuts! Now Purgatori's spell is broken, so Ernie heads down to Hell to find his siliconed love. Except one thing: she's not there. Prepare for the Evil One's wrath!



CAPTAIN AMERICA #446

CYBERFORCE #17

DAREDEVIL #347



EVIL ERNIE: STRAIGHT TO HELL #1

By Brian Pulido, Justiniano and Jason Jensen. Also, check out the *Chaos! Bible*, where you can learn everything you've ever wanted to know about Chaos!'s characters and creators. Tons of interviews, articles, reference stuff and even some sneak peeks at upcoming projects. **$2.95—*EVIL ERNIE*; $3.50—*CHAOS! BIBLE***

FANTASTIC FOUR #407

MARVEL Hide the women! Toss out the confetti! Slap the monkeys! It's the return of Reed Richards!!! Y'know, *Mr.* Fantastic. The guy who started this whole Fantastic thing? Well, he and that Doom feller are now back, and this here ish tells you all about where they've been, as well as fillin' ya in on just who was responsible for their untimely "deaths." Our guess: either Mephisto or the Psycho-Man. By Tom DeFalco, Paul Ryan and Danny Bulanadi. **$1.50**

FLASH #108

DC COMICS "Dead Heat," Part 1 (of 4). If you thought "Terminal Velocity" was nail-bitin', wait'll ya pick up the latest Flash storyline, where Wally bumps into his newest foe, Savitar. This guy's a speed freak who was touched by the "Speed Force" years ago and learned that with great power comes tons and tons of corruption! So now Wally's gotta face an opponent with complete control of his speed powers and a real capacity for killing! By Mark Waid, Oscar Jimenez and Jose Marzan Jr. Waid says, "It's a story about the guy who was supposed to be the Flash between Jay Garrick and Barry Allen. He was chosen by the Speed Force, but he went horribly, horribly wrong. The 'Dead Heat' series features all the super-speedsters—Jay Garrick, Johnny Quick, Jesse Quick and all those guys—and we will see the return of one of them that we have lost track of for some time, and we will also see that another one of them doesn't make it out of the story alive." **$1.75**

GEN^{13} #6

IMAGE Giving Fairchild a hickey. Boy, that sounds like fun. And that's exactly what some weird vampire thingy's intent on doin' to Caitlin and the rest of the gang when the Gen^{13} team heads down to Italy. Oh yeah, did I mention that a certain guy named Jim Lee is doin' the art this issue? By Brandon Choi, J. Scott Campbell, Jim Lee (See!) and Alex Garner. **$2.50**

MORE PICKS

IMPULSE #9

DC COMICS Holy hornswagglers! Max Mercury's missing! That means the only thing keepin' Impulse outta trouble is the guest-starrin' speedstress XS of Legion fame! Also, the "Dead Heat" storyline from *Flash* speeds this way, when the Flash stops by to save Impulse from a whole herd o' super-speeded ninjas! Sounds spiffy! By Mark Waid, Humberto Ramos and Wayne Faucher. **$1.75**

MADMAN COMICS #9

LEGEND/DARK HORSE "It's a small world after all. It's a small world after all. It's a small world after all. It's a small, small world." Wow, you're still reading this after that song? Impressive. Anyway, thanks to a whole bunch o' chemicals, Madman is shrunk down to an itty bitty wittle guy. What's worse, he bumps into The Creep on his way into Buzztown to get Dr. Flem's help! By the snappy Mike Allred. **$2.95**

MAGIC: THE GATHERING—HOMELANDS

ACCLAIM COMICS The newest *Magic* tale tells the story of Feroz and Serra, two mega-powerful planeswalkers who try to build a magical paradise in a war-torn land. In addition to a whole buncha maps, timelines and gaming tips, each copy of *Homelands* includes one of three rare *Magic* cards from the upcoming *Homelands* expansion set. By D.G. Chichester and Rebecca Guay. **$5.95**

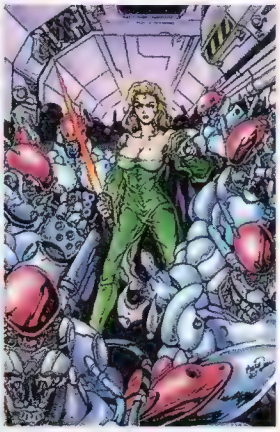
MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER #63-#64

ACCLAIM COMICS It seems that everyone on Earth, including Magnus' wife Leeja, is under Malev control. The big guy's in deep doo-doo, when he's forced into a battle to the death with Leeja! As if things couldn't get any worse, the Malevs have one demand: Either Magnus dies or they obliterate the entire human race! Hmm…tough choice. Nice knowin' ya, Magnus! Oh yeah, the Destroyer heads back to Earth to kick some major Malev butt! By Keith Giffen, Grey and Mike DeCarlo. **$2.50 EACH**

THE MASK #9

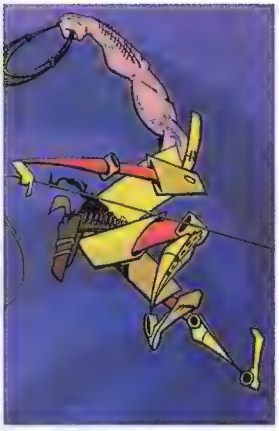
DARK HORSE "The Hunt for Green October," Part 4 (of 4). Y'know, food fights are fun until someone starts throwin' Spam.

FANTASTIC FOUR #407



MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER #63

MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER #64



SCUD #9

Ewwww… Anyway, alla those mask hunters head to Sky City, where they catch up with the true blue, er, green mask. Unfortunately, the one thing standin' in their way is one o' dem huge pies in the face. By Evan Dorkin and Peter Gross. **$2.50**

THE MAXX #20

IMAGE If you've gotta miss one issue of *The Maxx*, this is the one! Oh wait, that's all backwards. This is definitely the issue NOT to miss! You'll finally learn the answers to all—yes, ALL of your questions regarding Julie and The Maxx, as all those loose li'l threads get tied up. The end of The Maxx as you know him is now! Heh, but wait'll next month… By William Messner-Loebs and Sam Kieth. **$2.25**

SANDMAN #73 (of 75)

DC COMICS Following the hip, happenin' 1977 *Saturday Night Fever*, comes its sequel, "Sunday Mourning." Oh wait, sorry, that's actually the epilogue to the whole "Wake" storyline running in *Sandman*. Well, anyway, our ol' pal Hob Gadling catches up with Death at a Renaissance Festival (which are really neat! Go see one today!), and hears the woeful tale of poor ol' Dream. Sniff. By Neil Gaiman and Michael Zulli. **$2.50**

SCUD, THE DISPOSABLE ASSASSIN #9

FIREMAN PRESS Ready, kids? You won't need *any* hallucinogens for this puppy! It seems one of Scud's robotic arms is all mixed up with the limb of a Shakespeare-quoting werewolf. When Scud goes in search o' his ol' arm, he discovers that a Shakespeare-quoting astronaut (who's currently in orbit around Earth) now has it. Now if that ain't convoluted, I don't know what is! By the ever-whimsical Rob Schrab! **$2.95**

SPAWN #37

IMAGE Hey, it's a retro-Swamp Thingesque type o' Spawn tale! With Alan Moore on board this month, we get to meet The Freak (Hey, we met that guy at a recent comic con!), a horribly disfigured former cop who lives in the sewers. During his war on society's careless attitude towards its environment, The Freak comes upon ol' Spawnie-guy, who must decide if The Freak is indeed a friend or foe! By Alan Moore, Todd McFarlane and Greg Capullo. **$1.95**

MORE PICKS

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS (OR WHATEVER THE HELL THEY'RE CALLING 'EM NOW)

MARVEL *Web of Scarlet Spider* #2 features "CyberWar," Part 1 (of 4). In one corner, it's Alistair Smythe and his new generation of Cyber-Slayers, and in the other it's Master Programmer's network. In the middle—the Scarlet Spider! Part 2 picks up in *Amazing Scarlet Spider* #2, as Scarley meets the new Green Goblin, and a new nasty babe called Joystick. *Scarlet Spider* #2 contains Part 3, and a mysterious all-new Scarlet Spider! Now there's *two* of 'em?? Grrr. The conclusion shows up in *Spectacular Scarlet Spider* #2, where we learn if Ben Reilly will finally become Spider-Man once and for all! (Or is that twice and for all?) And in *Untold Tales of Spider-Man* #4 this month, we learn the origin of the J. Jonah Jameson/Spider-Man feud! **$1.95 EACH; 99 CENTS—*UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN***

STAR WARS BOOKS

DARK HORSE What kinda month would it be without an all-new *Star Wars* series? Check out *Star Wars: Heir to the Empire* #1 (of 6), which takes place some five years after *Return of the Jedi*. Han and Leia are married, Luke's busy rebuilding the ranks of the Jedi, and some guy named Grand Admiral Thrawn has taken control of the Imperial fleet and intends on destroying the Rebel Alliance's New Republic! Over in *Star Wars: X-Wing—Rogue Squadron* #4, Tycho Celchu must choose between blowing his cover in the Imperial army and destroying his Rebel pals. That's gotta suck. Over in *Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi—The Sith War* #3 (of 6), Ulic Qel-Droma (I LOVE that name!) has given in to the dark side, and now he's gotta stand trial before his Jedi masters to answer for his heinous crimes! Be sure to check out *Star Wars: Empire's End* #1 (of 2), which follows the heels of *Dark Empire II*. Emperor Palpatine was forced to occupy a crappy clone-body (Hey—unannounced Marvel crossover!), but now that body is quickly deteriorating. His only hope is to mix some Jedi genes with his, and his first target is Han and Leia's kid, Anakin! Poor li'l guy. **$2.95—*HEIR TO THE EMPIRE, ROGUE SQUADRON, EMPIRE'S END*; $2.50—*SITH WAR***

STATIC #30

MILESTONE/DC It's his toughest challenge to date. Virgil Hawkins must come to grips with the death of his closest friend. This touching story will ensure that Static's life is never the same again. By Ivan Velez Jr., Wilfred and John Stanisci. **$2.50**

SPIDER-MAN BOOKS

STAR WARS: EMPIRE'S END #1

STAR WARS: HEIR TO THE EMPIRE #1

STAR WARS: TALES OF THE JEDI—THE SITH WAR #3

SUPERMAN BOOKS

DC COMICS "Back on the chain gang…" The "Trial of Superman" continues in *Action Comics* #716, with Supes and the gang doin' their best Pretenders interpretation. The Big S finds himself chained to a bunch o' prison fugitives who are just a few steps ahead of a Tribunal agent who's gunnin' to recover the felons. But fear not, 'cause over in *Superman: The Man of Steel* #51, Supes busts out o' the chain gang and heads out in search of any clues that'd clear his name. But little does he know that someone's hot on his trail! Then go grab yerself a copy of *Superman* #107, where that dastardly Cyborg returns and wipes out Superboy, Steel, Supergirl and the Eradicator! And just where is Alpha Centurion? (Hey, ya think Alpha Centurion is really...nah.) As for Superman himself, he happens to stumble upon a certain shrunken city in a bottle. (Cleveland?) Over in *Adventures of Superman* #530, while the Man of Steel is off in space somewhere being hunted by some unseen enemy, back on Earth, the souped-up Hellgrammite is runnin' rampant through Metropolis. Looks like the folks in the Special Crimes Unit get to put their butts on the line and bring ol' Helly down themselves. Round off yer Super-month with *Superman: The Man of Tomorrow* #3, and learn the secret behind Luthor's return! While that happens, that long-haired Kryptonian freak is stuck on some wacky alien world with a certain Cyborg and the Tribunal. Needless to say, things get messy. **$1.95 EACH**

TARZAN VS. PREDATOR: AT THE EARTH'S CORE #3 (of 4)

DARK HORSE Boy, these Predators sure are stupid. First they start a little skirmish with Tarzan by hunting his friends like beasts and rippin' up the sacred land of Pellucidar. Now these morons have ravaged Jane, and Tarzan becomes the predator while the Predators become the prey. We just wanna know where that slacker Cheetah is. By Walt Simonson and Lee Weeks. **$2.50**

UNDERWORLD UNLEASHED #2-#3 (of 3)

DC COMICS Now that Neron's got all the villains on his side,

BLOOD FEUD™

SOME THINGS ARE BETTER LEFT IN THE DARK!

ALAN MOORE *story* **TONY DANIEL** *pencils* **KEVIN CONRAD** *inks*

A FOUR ISSUE MINI-SERIES STARTING WITH A PREVIEW IN SPAWN 31.
GREAT STORY, INCREDIBLE ARTWORK AND ONLY FROM IMAGE COMICS.

MORE PICKS

he goes around offering the heroes some pretty good deals in issue #2. And wouldn't ya know it, one o' them Justice Leaguers accepts! Then in the final issue, Neron's honest-to-God true plans are finally revealed. DC's heroes go head-to-head with the demon and his new super-energized horde of villains. Looks like the job requirements just got lots tougher for DC's good guys. By Mark Waid, Howard Porter and Dan Green. **$2.95 EACH**

WILDC.A.T.S #24

IMAGE Get to know that big guy called Maul, as he meets the Titanothropes, an alien race very similar to him. Also, the rest o' the team learns some pretty shocking news about their home planet Khera. By Alan "I need a shave" Moore and Travis Charest. **$2.50**

WONDER WOMAN #104

DC COMICS Now that their war with Darkseid's over, those Amazon chicks start countin' their dead and plannin' for the future. And since Hippolyta's missing, Diana must decide whether to rule Themyscira in her mother's place or not. By John Byrne, John Byrne and John Byrne. **$1.95**

THE X-FILES #10-#11

TOPPS What the?! Two issues in one month? Oooh, there's always somethin' fishy goin' on with Scully and Mulder... The three-part "Feelings of Unreality" storyline starts here. Scully starts to think that Mulder's really losing his mind, ever since he found some helmet in the Silent City that supposedly enables him to see into the future. Issue #11 sees Scully's attempts at saving Mulder squashed by her former ally Colleen Dunne. Colleen suckers Mulder into giving her the helmet, and then things get real...strange. By Stefan Petrucha and Charles Adlard. **$2.95 EACH**

X-MEN BOOKS

MARVEL Da na na na naaaa na na. Da na na na naaa na na. Y'know, that theme song from the X-Men cartoon's kinda catchy. Anywho, *Uncanny X-Men* #327 lets you in on a little secret: the fate of Magneto! Yep, he's that guy who's been bad, good, bad again, turned into an infant, good again, scrambled, grilled and mindwiped. Then over in *X-Men* #47, Dazzler and those pesky li'l X-Babies show up. **$1.95 EACH**

STATIC #30

WILDC.A.T.s #24

THE X-FILES #10

THE X-FILES #11

YOUNGBLOOD #2

IMAGE The newest Youngblood team goes face-to-face with Judge Dredd. Wow! What a crossover. This could...oh, sorry. It's just some lethal, omniscient guy from the future called Dread that they go up against. There's also some mysterious alien thingie heading towards Earth really, really fast! By Rob Liefeld, Eric Stephenson, Roger Cruz and Danny Miki. **$2.50** **W**

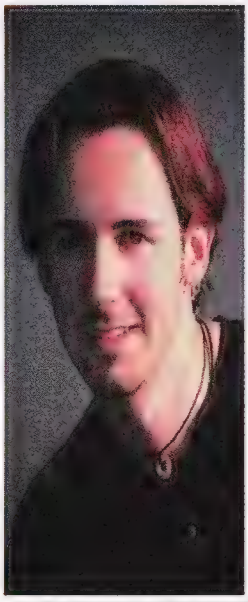
WHAT I'M READING

name: **J. Scott Campbell**

occupation: **Penciler of *Gen*[13]** (Image)

currently reads: "I've been checking out DC's ***Impulse*** lately, mainly because of Humberto Ramos' art. I think he's probably one of the most interesting artists going right now. The story works out pretty cool, too. I kind of like how they show him barely making it to class after he fights some villain on his way to school. It's a fun book, and I think there needs to be more of those out there.

"I also like Dark Horse's ***Ghost in the Shell***. I have the Japanese version, and now, of course, they're translating it. It's a pretty complex story, but I like the idea that it focuses on one main character."



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CABLE
X-FORCE
ROGUE
X-MEN
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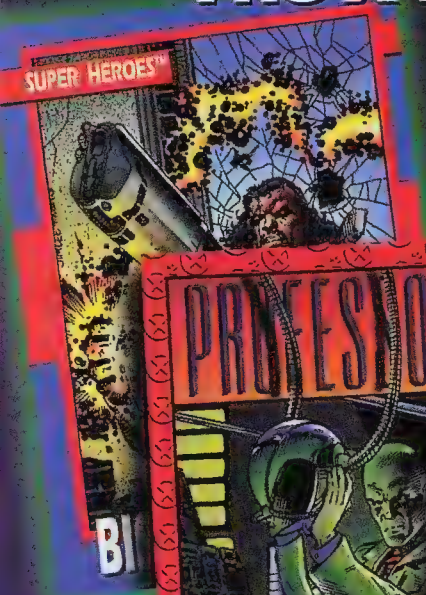
SALES POWER

The X-Men Phenomenon!



Average Audience (000) – Male Teens

1992-93		1993-94		1994-95	
X-Men	880	X-Men	850	X-Men	840
Saved By The Bell/2	470	Red Planet	640	Spider-Man	730
Tales From Cryptkeeper	470	Tick	620	Red Planet	720
Saved By The Bell	440	Batman & Robin	570	Tick	600
Sonic The Hedgehog	420	Carmen Sandiego	520	Batman & Robin	520
Taz-Mania	420	Terrible Thunderlizards	520	Carmen Sandiego	450

Top-ranked Saturday morning program for 3 consecutive seasons.

Best selling card line in history!

Thirty years as best selling comic team!

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DRAWING POWER

The X-Men Kubed!

The top pencilers in the industry!

Andy and Adam Kubert are known for the dramatic storytelling and explosive action they put in their artwork. Andy's fame is from the work he has done on X-Men while Adam has gained popularity drawing Wolverine.

Joe Kubert, most noted for his character TOR, is the founder of the Kubert School of Art and a nominee for the EISNER HALL OF FAME.

Computer colorist supreme!

Jung has set the standard by which computer coloring is measured through his work on Flair™ '94, Flair™ '95, Marvel Metal™ and Marvel OverPower.™

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Fleer's First All-Chromium Set!

Signature Series
100-card set, gold foil stamped with each artist's signature. One in every pack.

Embossed Cards
Another Fleer first! Featuring characters from the X-Men and Age of Apocalypse. Feel the Power! Approximately 1:2 packs.

HoloFlash™
The most dangerous X-Men and their weapons on etched, holographic foil. Approximately 1:6 packs.

FLEER ULTRA X-MEN™ CHECKLIST

1. Archangel
2. Beast
3. Bishop
4. Cannonball
5. Cyclops
6. Gambit
7. Iceman
8. Jean Grey
9. Professor X
10. Psylocke
11. Rogue
12. Storm
13. Wolverine
14. Forge
15. Havok
16. Mystique
17. Random
18. Sabretooth
19. Strong Guy
20. Boomer
21. Cable
22. Domino
23. Shatterstar
24. Warpath
25. Colossus
26. Douglock
27. Nightcrawler
28. Shadowcat
29. Banshee
30. Chamber
31. Husk
32. Jubilee
33. M
34. Mondo
35. Penance
36. Skin
37. Synch
38. White Queen
39. Alter Beast
40. Holocaust
41. Sugar Man
42. X-Man
43. Lifeforce
44. Deadbolt
45. Gauntlet
46. Genesis
47. Hurricane
48. Spyne
49. Tusk
50. Corsair
51. Deadpool
52. Kane
53. Lilandra
54. Longshot
55. Magneto
56. Maverick
57. Raza
58. Albert
59. Apocalypse
60. Black Tom Cassidy
61. Blob
62. Blood Scream
63. Cyber
64. Emplate
65. Gladiator
66. Juggernaut
67. Lady Deathstrike
68. Legion
69. Locus
70. Mojo
71. Mr. Sinister
72. Omega Red
73. Orphan Maker
74. Sauron
75. Sentinels
76. Silver Samurai
77. Spiral
78. Stryfe
79. Toad

WOLVERINE TIMELINE

80. Logan
81. CIA
82. Weapon X
83. Department H
84. Mariko
85. Sidekick
86. Fatal Attractions
87. Blood Oath
88. Broken Claws
89. Back Again

HAUNTED MANSION

90. Beast
91. Colossus
92. Cyclops
93. Gambit
94. Iceman
95. Professor X
96. Psylocke
97. Rogue
98. Storm
99. Wolverine
100. Checklist

EMBOSSED CARDS

1. Beast
2. Alter Beast
3. Bishop
4. Bishop
5. Cable
6. X-Man
7. Cyclops
8. Cyclops
9. Forge
10. Forge
11. Jean Grey
12. Jean Grey
13. Mr. Sinister
14. Sinister
15. Omega Red
16. Rossovich
17. Storm
18. Storm
19. Wolverine
20. Weapon X

HOLOFLASH™ CARDS

1. Archangel
2. Bishop
3. Cable
4. Domino
5. Gambit
6. Omega Red
7. Psylocke
8. Random
9. Wolverine

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SGW US Patent #4,933,218, #5,082,703, #5,106,126 and #5,223,357

THE ULTIMATE BATTLE KICKS OFF IN DECEMBER—MARVEL VS. DC

Coinciding with the ultimate crossover between Marvel and DC Comics slated for December, the 100-card SkyBox DC versus Marvel/Marvel versus DC set features big-name artists like Andy and Adam Kubert, Jimmy Palmiotti, Joe Quesada, Jim Balent, Nelson, Dave Dorman, Joe Jusko, Darick Robertson, John Byrne, Boris Vallejo, Julie Bell and more.

The basic set, in which all cards are UV coated and foil stamped, will include all the heroes and villains.

Here's the skinny: 12 Marvel hero cards; 12 DC hero cards, 10 Marvel villain cards, 10 DC villain cards, 11 Rivalry cards that depict major battles; 16 Hero vs. Hero cards; 13 Hero vs. Villain cards, and 15 Villain vs. Villain cards.

"This is the biggest event to hit the comic industry in ages," said Fleer product manager Dan Buckley (Fleer recently purchased SkyBox). "It's something fans everywhere have envisioned for years."

Card backs will be narrated by Clark Kent and Peter Parker, with Kent offering commentary on the Marvel cards and Parker discussing the DC characters.

Chase cards include 18 Impact cards (approx. one in four packs)—embossed cards featuring the art of Boris Vallejo and Julie Bell—illustrating the battles between The Avengers and The Justice League of America, and The Titans vs. The X-Men. 12 HoloFX cards (approx. one in 12 packs) will feature the art of the Rivalry group from the basic set and two Mirage cards will each feature three images (approx. one in 360 packs).

Suggested retail price for 10-card packs is $1.99.

In addition, fans can decide who will win some of the more major battles. Out of 11 battles depicted in the comic series, five (Superman vs. Hulk; Batman vs. Captain America; Superboy vs. Spider-Man; Lobo vs. Wolverine; and Wonder Woman vs. Storm) will be voted on via ballots inserted into packs of trading cards and into issue #1 of the crossover. Results will be featured through the course of the mini-series.

SKYBOX

Star Trek has proven a viable commodity for card collectors, so SkyBox has announced its latest card series: Season Three Star Trek cards.

Season Three of The Episode Collection focuses on every episode produced during the third season of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

The series consists of a 108-card basic set that includes images taken directly from show footage. Two nine-card, foil-stamped subsets are dedicated to Doctor Beverly Crusher and Security Chief Worf, and another nine-card subset features a detailed episodic mural. A bonus subset of six foil-stamped and embossed cards features Klingon language and three character cards including Lal, Locutus and K'Ehleyr (one in 12 packs). Two bonus dual-image flip hologram cards feature Crusher and Worf (one in 180 packs).

Each eight-card pack carries a suggested retail price of $1.29.

• SkyBox introduced the first ever embossed Spectra cards as part of the SkyBox Master Series: Creators Edition Trading Cards. Six embossed Spectra cards were scheduled to be released in late September as bonus cards to the set. Artists include Julie Bell and her character Tetonka (exclusively created for the card set), Brom, Dave Dorman, Dave McKean, Brian Stelfreeze and Simon Bisley.

• *Mortal Kombat* trading cards blasted on the scene in September based on the smash hit film of the same name. The 90-card set includes subsets from the Mortal Kombat 3 arcade game and the new *Mortal Kombat* animated feature video.

Any set where Geordi gets in a fight, has gotta be good! ST:TNG Season Three.

Hey, isn't he that wrasslin' guy with the war dance? SkyBox's Creator Edition.

Finish him! The *Mortal Kombat* set.

The 90-card set includes 63 storyline cards, nine character cards, nine animation cards, eight game-code cards and two levels of bonus cards—four bonus Red Foil cards (one in nine packs) and three Warrior Champion foil embossed bonus cards (one in 18 packs).

Eight-card packs have a suggested retail price of $1.29.

COMIC IMAGES

The Golden Age set the standard for the comics industry today. From the first appearance of Superman to the creation of Spider-Man and Captain America, the period from 1938 until the mid-1940s has had a lasting effect.

Comic Images has now collected some of the key works in The Golden Age of Comics All-Chromium Collector Cards, due out in November. This series showcases 90 pieces of art from many books including *Green Mask*, *Blue Beetle*, *Man of War*, *Amazing Man*, *Silver Streak*, *Hit Comics*, *Crackerjack Funnies*, *Planet Comics* and more.

Each pack (seven cards per pack) carries a suggested retail price of $2.29. Inserts include six metallic chase cards featuring rare #1 covers, 500 autographed cards by Gil Fox and Arthur Fine, and a three-card MagnaChrome subset of Schomberg art.

• The Fantasy Art of Stephen Hickman Collector Cards spotlights the distinctive style of Hickman, a noted fantasy and science fiction artist. The 90-card set (10 cards per pack, 99 cents per pack) will feature full-color, full-bleed card fronts.

TOPPS

Cyberforce takes on the card industry with the release of the super-premium Cyberforce Finest series, which debuted in September.

The 72-card set includes characters from Marc Silvestri's books *Cyberforce* and *Codename: Stryke Force*.

Three levels of chase cards include 18 "Cyber Optics" chromium cards illustrated by Jae Lee, J. Scott Campbell and Walter Simonson. A bonus nine-card, super-size image of Cyberforce was created especially for this set.

Six Matrix cards feature Ripclaw, Cyblade and other teammates (one per 12 packs). The third level of chase cards—three Stryke Force Clearzone Chrome cards—are inserted one in every 24 packs and form a hinged frame when placed together.

Each pack contains five cards (four regular cards plus one insert) and carries a suggested price tag of $2.50. W

All this fine information was sniffed out by that headbanging, wall-crawlin', Taco Bell-guzzlin' Wizard *staff.*

"So, come here often?" The Fantasy Art of Stephen Hickman Collector Cards.

InQuest presents HIT THE DECK

The latest in collectible card game news

• A new *Magic* world champion has been declared! Former American champion Zak Dolan is out, replaced by Alexander Blumke, a 26-year-old student from Geneva, Switzerland. Armed with a black/white discard deck, Blumke used Racks, Mind Twists, Icy Manipulators, Sengir Vampires, Hymn to Tourachs, Mishra's Factories, and Zuran Orbs to take the best of five match (3-2) from Marc Hernadez, the runner-up from France who, incidentally, played a Vise deck.

In the team championships, the United States finished on top, followed by Finland and Australia.

• The latest word from Wizards of the Coast is that *Homelands* is a go. Slated for an October release, *Homelands* is set in a world that has remained hidden for centuries, filled with many mysteries, including the long-lost ancestries of both the Hurloon Minotaurs and Serra Angels. *Homelands* is the first standard *Magic* expansion since *Fallen Empires* in November '94.

Check out this cool *Homelands* card called Baron Sengir!

• Cthulhu, H.P. Lovecraft's favorite pet nightmare, will finally be heading to CCGs in March of next year. Based on Chaosium's popular *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game, *Mythos* has players struggling against the dark minions of the Elder Gods as their occult investigators search for tomes and spells, and strive to keep their sanity! Can you say *big freakin' trouble*?

• Hot on the heels of Daedalus Games' early success, *Shadowfist*'s first expansion set, the 140-card *Netherworld*, acts as a launching point for different time periods. It debuts in September with new cards for every *Shadowfist* group and cool art from fan favorites Anson Maddocks, Jesper Myrfors and Rob Alexander, among others.

Other Daedalus plans include *Feng Shui*, a *Shadowfist* roleplaying game; a *Shadowfist* players guide detailing the factions, game dynamics, strategies and killer combos; and *Showdown Sets*, pairs of pre-made *Shadowfist* decks.

• Wait, there's more stuff coming out in late September/early October. *Legends of the Five Rings* by Alderac Entertainment will have you fighting for control of the throne in 15th-century feudal Japan, battling it out against ninjas, wu-jen, samurais and more assassins than you can shake a bo-stick at.

Kult, Heartbreaker's latest endeavor, puts you in control of your own dream world, balancing the life and death of all humanity. Based on Metropolis' horror RPG of the same name, you play the role of an Archon or an Angel of Death (i.e., God or Satan...over here in the States, we got the watered down version). Fairly grandiose, huh?

And finally, with the start of fall, we hope to see one of the most eagerly awaited games of the year—*Star Wars*. ■ *Michael Searle*

Michael Searle is the editor of Wizard's sister mag InQuest, *the all-around grooviest guide to collectible card games.*

SAVE

Half-a-Buck on the Wizard Annual!

ON SALE THE LAST WEEK OF OCTOBER

THE WIZARD ANNUAL is the authoritative price guide for comic books. Get it for 50¢ off the cover price. Just clip out the coupon below and redeem it at your local comic book store.

Don't Miss It!

- More than 150,000 comic prices.
- A gigantic cover gallery, including all the best covers of 1995.
- Great articles on collecting, grading, and pricing comic books.

Win

X-MEN #1!

Contest entry inside each issue.

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Limit one coupon per purchase. No facsimiles accepted. Coupon expires January 1, 1996.

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Please send all coupons redeemed together with a copy of your distributor invoice showing your purchase of the Wizard Price Guide Annual, your address and your phone number to:

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Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920

You will be reimbursed 50¢ plus 8¢ to help cover postage and handling. All coupons must be received by February 1, 1996.

A HOTTER-THAN-EVER SUMMER

The summer of 1995 been one of the hottest on record, and so has this summer's comic book market. Bad Girl books, X-titles, cartoon tie-ins, *X-Files*, small press stuff, and new DC series like *Preacher* and *Starman* have ignited fan interest. We've talked to retailers, conferred with our knowledgeable board of VIP advisors, tabulated the surveys from our nationwide retailer network and distilled it all into this month's price guide. So, for the latest on the state of the comics market, read on and see where it's headed.

X MARKS THE SPOT

The magic letter is "X" when it comes to Marvel. Mutant mania continues to flourish and is, in fact, the one truly bright spot among all the Marvel titles. *X-Men*, *Uncanny X-Men*, the "Age of Apocalypse" tie-ins, *Wolverine*, *Generation X* and all the other X-titles are the top Marvel sellers, according to retailers.

SMALL PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Stray Bullets is an unbelievable smash hit. Writer/arist David Lapham shows he's got what it takes, even moreso than he did at Defiant. Retailers report that sales on this El Capitán title are climbing, and the excellent stories are keeping fans excited. *Poison Elves*, from Sirius, is also a hit. The gorgeous Joseph Michael Linsner cover on issue #1 could be one reason for all the excitement. The success of the new series is fueling demand for the original *I, Lusipher* series, as well. Low print runs have left many stores high and dry, causing them to scramble to find a source for restocking. Fireman Press' *Scud, The Disposable Assassin* continues to attract a growing crowd of fans, with some retailers reporting prices as high as $10 for issue #1.

What's behind the heat in the small press market? Kevin Harmon of Cactus Comics in Tucson, Ariz. sums it up best: "I attribute the growing interest in independent comics to the lack of originality that seems to be plaguing the so-called leaders of the industry."

by Jon Warren

MANGA MARKET

Ghost in the Shell is topping the list of most-popular manga titles this month. Fans are ever on the lookout for early issues, but the supply is dwindling. *Warrior Nun Areala*, *Oh My Goddess!*, *Dirty Pair* and *Ranma 1/2* are also firmly in the hot category. "Demand for *Oh My Goddess!* is finally leveling off," notes Mark Thompson of Cold Cut Comics in San Jose, Calif. "Thank goodness! No series could keep up that furious pace of demand for long!"

SILVER LINING

Demand for high-grade Silver Age keys remains strong, but the market for non-keys and mid-grade keys continues to be weak. Prices for top keys like *Amazing Fantasy* #15, *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 and many of the important first appearances in *Showcase* (including #4, the first Silver Age Flash, and #22, the first appearance of the Silver Age Green Lantern) moved up in price this month.

IN A NUTSHELL

• *Gen*^{13} takes the top spot on the *Wizard* Top Ten Comics list again, in the form of its huge set of variant covers for the ongoing series' #1. The series' issues #1A and #1B—the "standard" editions—are just about as hot as the 11 variants and issue #2. *Gen*^{13} collector packs saw the largest price increase, with the Jim Lee pack leading the way at $200. The mini-series' #1 also falls into the hard-to-find, easy-to-sell category.

• *X-Men Prime*—The book that launched the new X-title storylines after the "Age of Apocalypse" saga moves down a notch to the number two spot on our list, still attracting strong demand at the current $7.50 price.

• *X-Files* continues to be a hot item, as fans of the show clamor for a fix during the summer months of incessant reruns. Many store owners are unable to track down copies of #1 to replace their supply. Prices remained stable at $35 for #1 and $15 for #2.

• Shi remains at the top of the Bad Girls list. Bill Tucci's heroine is a big-time fan hit, no doubt about it. Her whole series is hot, but issues #1 & #2 are hotter than a corduroy jock strap.

• *Lady Death* #1 and #2 stay in the Top 20 (you'll notice that we added "The Next Ten" to our Top 10 list) this month, at the five and fifteen spots, respectively. The entire *Lady Death* series is experiencing strong demand, while #2 vaulted up to $45 this month.

• *Lady Death: Between Heaven and Hell* #1—Another Steven Hughes hit, this scorcher breaks into our Top 20 list at position number seventeen. The books currently move quickly at the $8 to $10 range.

• *Double Impact*—China and Jazz, two more contestants in the Bad Girls beauty contest, "bust" onto the Top 10 scene this month. Our crack staff of Market Watchers tell us that the #2A black-bagged nude edition is fetching $20, and the silver-bagged commemorative edition is ringing in at $30.

• *Ash* #1—Taking over the number seven spot, Joe Quesada's firefighter superhero has scored big with both fans and store owners. Issue #1 is burning up comic shops at 15 bucks a pop this month; people can't get enough of this innovative series.

X-Men is on all retailers' minds these days, in the wake of "The Age of Apocalypse." One of the carry-over titles is *X-Man*.

• *X-Man* #1—Continued strong interest in this young hero's "Age of Apocalypse" series

places his first book at the number 10 spot, as its price increases to $6.

• *The Maxx* #1—MTV's cartoon version of Sam Kieth's antihero, which has been renewed for next season, is probably responsible for the comic's continued popularity. Issue #1 slides into position 11 this month, just under our Top 10 list.

• *Amazing Spider-Man* #400—The death of Aunt May remains stiff at $6, and the white-bagged edition is reaching critical condition at $25, up $5 from last month.

• *Akira*—The recent, wilder-than-ever rage for manga books has created renewed interest in this title. #1 weighs in at $15, #2 at $9, and #18-#33 ring the bell at $5 each.

• *Angela*—The mini-series featuring the warrior angel from *Spawn* continues its heavenly pace, as #1 wings its way to $7, #2 also floats to $7 and #3 virtuously climbs to $6.

• *Avengelyne*—Maximum Press brings us another hot title in the Bad Girl category, as issue #1 moves to $6 this month, with the rainbow hologram issue holding steady at $25.

• *Bone*—Demand for early issues of Jeff Smith's multi-Eisner-award-winning hit has driven prices up this month. No doubt Jeff's move to Image will help his highly acclaimed series reach an even wider audience. Issue #1 moves to $225, while #2 vaults to $120.

• *The Books of Magic*—The Vertigo series featuring the popular Tim Hunter character also moved up in price this month. Issue #1 materializes at $5, #2 at $3.50 and #3 at $3. Retailers report much magical momentum for this title.

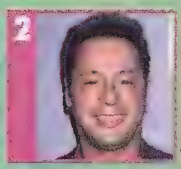
• *Continüm* #1—This first appearance of Dawn, by Mr. Linsner, is just beginning to attract attention. It's scarce, it's hot and its price moves up to $60 this month.

• *Creed*—Trent Kaniuga's original two-issue series from Hall of Heroes is steadily warming up. Prices stay at $15 for #1 and $20 for #2, but retailers expect to be out of stock and looking to replenish soon. Same goes for the

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

Al Ortega

1 **Todd McFarlane**
Spawn


Al Ortega

2 **Joe Quesada**
Ash

3 **William Tucci**
Shi

Al Ortega

4 **Jim Lee**
(upcoming: *Gen*[13] *#6-#7*)

Jim Gund

5 **Adam Hughes**
Ghost

6 **Bart Sears**
X-O Manowar

7 **Greg Capullo**
Spawn

Al Ortega

8 **Frank Miller**
upcoming: *Sin City, Silent Night*

9 **Stephen Platt**
Prophet

Jon Gipe

10 **Steven Hughes**
Lady Death

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST WRITERS

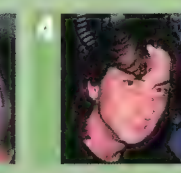
Al Ortega

1 **Neil Gaiman**
Sandman

Al Ortega

2 **Peter David**
Incredible Hulk, Aquaman, Spider-Man 2099

3 **Chris Claremont**
Sovereign Seven


Al Ortega

4 **Frank Miller**
upcoming: *Sin City, Silent Night*

Al Ortega

5 **John Byrne**
Wonder Woman

Mitch Jenkins

6 **Alan Moore**
Violator, WildC.A.T.s

J. Schuyler

7 **Scott Lobdell**
X-Men

Al Ortega

8 **Jeff Smith**
Bone

9 **Dan Jurgens**
Superman, upcoming: *Sensational Spider-Man*

J. Schuyler

10 **Fabian Nicieza**
X-Men

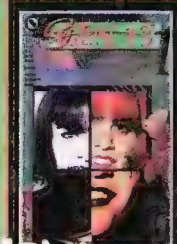
WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS AND WRITERS LISTS ARE DERIVED FROM A NATIONWIDE RETAILER SURVEY.

WIZARD'S UP & COMING CREATOR

HUMBERTO RAMOS

Making a splash with a run on Milestone's *Hardware*, Ramos is rapidly gaining loads of fans with his depictions of Bart Allen and friends in DC's increasingly popular *Impulse* series. His manga-ish style gives the title an exciting, unique look, in not only his portrayals of the fledgling speedster's wild adventures, but also his hilarious peeks into Bart's hyperactive mind. We're sure that Ramos'll be going places fast. (Get it? "Fast"? Ha, we're so funny.)

WIZARD'S WINNER AND LOSER OF THE MONTH



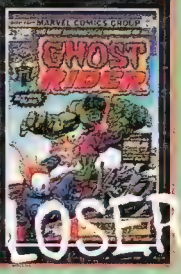
Gen[13]
Image

The *Gen*[13] collector packs, reportedly allocated to retailers with a print run of only 7,500 sets, show the biggest increase this month. The Jim Lee edition is the most sought-after of the chromium signed books.

WINNER

All 1970s Ghost Riders
Marvel

The *Ghost Rider* series from the 1970s fried this month, with across-the-board price decreases.



LOSER

MARKET WATCHERS

Letters to the Price Guide

Dear Market Watchers,

I recently came upon a book published by Playboy Press, entitled *Playboy's Little Annie Fanny*, tucked away between some boxes in the garage. In light of the success and rising value of *Penthouse Comix*, is this particular book worth anything? I don't know if it will help, but the original price was $2.50, the copyright is 1966 and it is a First Edition. I've looked in several price guides and can't seem to find it listed.

Thanks for any help you may supply!

Bill Edwards
El Paso, TX

What you have is a paperback book, not a comic. By consulting *The Official Paperback Price Guide* 1991 edition (by yours truly), you'll see the value of that treasure from the past is listed at $25. Not bad!

Dear Market Watchers,

I have some questions about some unlisted comics. I'm dying to know how much they're worth! The first is *Konga* #15 (1963), published by Charlton. The second is *Tragg & the Sky Gods* #6 (1976), by Gold Key. And finally, *Classics Illustrated, Jr.* #569 (1968).

That's all for now, comic fiends!

Christian Gheorgiv
Los Angeles, CA

OK, here goes: *Konga* #15 is worth $40 in Near Mint, *Tragg and the Sky Gods* #6 is worth only about a buck, and *Classics Illustrated, Jr.* #569 (featuring The Three Giants) is worth $10 in Near Mint condition. By the way, if you don't find a comic listed in *Wizard*'s price guide, try looking in the *Wizard Annual*, which lists over 100,000 different comic books with their values. If you don't own a copy of the *Annual*, pick up the latest edition at your local comics shop this November.

Dear Market Watchers,

For many months, I have sat back and laughed as everybody has attempted to solve the "polybag crisis." Now that it has gotten somewhat old, I figured I'd let everyone in on the secret. For everyone who wants to read a polybagged comic, but still wants to be able to have full resale value without having to buy multiple copies, the solution is simple. Simply make a perfectly straight opening in the bag (this requires great tearing skills or a sharp object of some sort). After you have finished reading the comic, put it back in the bag, and using a cigarette lighter, carefully melt the edge together (this shouldn't take more than about 10 to 15 seconds).

Crisis solved.

Greg Council
Largo, FL

You're a *genius*, Greg! Now that your secret is out, will the world ever be the same?

Dear Market Watchers,

Some questions about your lovely price guide. You list a *Backlash* #1 variant cover edition, while my understanding was that the two covers were equally distributed. Which one is the variant? And a more general question: To what extent do you think *Wizard* affects prices in the comics market?

Stephen G. Picard
Rochester, NY

The answer to your Backlash question is: You're right, we're wrong, the two covers new Lightning series.

• *Cry for Dawn*—Demand for Joe Linsner's classic series, at the top of every store's buy list, is far out-stripping supply. Prices on issues #7 and #8 take a big jump this month to $10 and $8 respectively, while other issues hold their ground.

• *Dawn* #1—Riding the Bad Girls wave, issue #1 slinks up to $5. We've added the Black Light version to the price guide for the first time this month; it's priced at $20. Meanwhile, *Drama* #1, a Dawn-starring book, jumps to $10 this month.

• *Evil Ernie*—All issues are cookin', including *Revenge!*, *Resurrection* and the first series (with its Lady Death appearances). Demand at current prices stays buoyant, with price increases on issues #2-#4 of the *Resurrection* series.

• *Fang*—A small press title that's been picking up steam lately. Issue #1 moves up to $4 this month.

• *Fantastic Four*—The first apps of the Silver Surfer and Galactus move up this month, with retailers reporting a scarcity of high-grade copies. Issue #48, the first Surfer, jumps to $800, while #49, the planet-eater's debut, moves to $200.

• *Flaming Carrot*—Bob Burden's redheaded carrot character still has a strong fan following, and early issues are tough to find in nice shape. Issue #1 moves up to $55, while many of the other issues move up as well.

• *Generation X* #1—Stores are reporting intense demand these days. Issue #1 makes our Top 20 list of hottest comics, although prices are holding steady at present.

• *Ghost*—Adam Hughes' ongoing Dark Horse series is gaining popularity by the week. Issue #1 haunts the $5.50 to $7 range at present.

• *Ghost in the Shell*—Another Dark Horse series with heat, this one is by Masamune Shirow. Prices on issues #1-#4 all enjoyed price increases this month.

• *Ghost Rider*—Citing sales that continue to be either sluggish or nonexistent, retailers vote to lower prices on this once-popular series. At present, the original series from the 1970s feels the sting of the merciless blue bars in the price guide.

• *Hellblazer* #60—Here's one to watch. This book is the first appearance of Genesis, the love child of the demon and the angel from *Hellblazer*. Genesis escapes to Earth and inhabits the body of Jesse, who is the preacher in the strong-selling DC/Vertigo series of the same name. Many collectors are just starting to make the connection between Genesis and Preacher, and retailers have noted an uptick in demand. With the popularity of *Preacher*, this is a book that should have definite legs.

• *Incredible Hulk* #181—This book is quickly becoming one of the most sought-after comics from the 1970s. Retailers report severe difficulty in finding copies for their customers, and the price moves up to $370 this month.

• *Iron Fist* #15A—Keith Contarino of Contarino's Comics in Atlanta notes strong demand for this 35-cent cover variant with the UPC code similar to the *Star Wars* variant. Keith reports heavy interest *whenever* he's able to locate a copy, and asks, "Why don't you guys list this book?" Okay, Keith, we've listed it.

• *Kindred* #1—A popular Image title, issue #1 moved to $9.50 this month.

• *Lady Rawhide*—Issue #1 has sold out, according to our retailer contacts, and *Special* #1, reprinting *Zorro* #2 and #3 (her first appearance), have moved up to $4.50 in the guide.

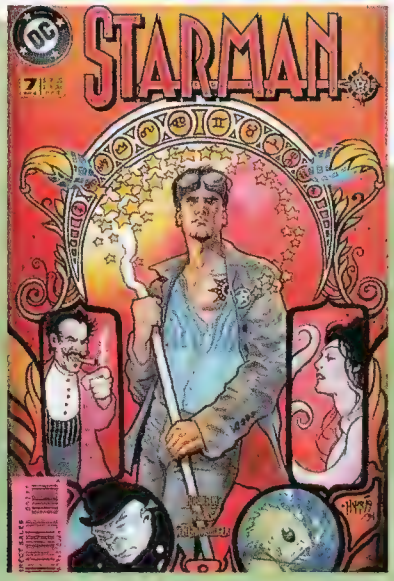
• *Razor*—The first appearance of Shi in *Annual* #1 is a hot commodity, taking the book up to $40 this month. The rest of Razor's books are still making a killing.

• *Showcase*—The demand for high-grade copies from this, the top Silver Age DC series, remains incendiary. With first Silver Age appearances of such classic characters and teams as Flash, Challengers of the

Unknown, The Atom, The Metal Men and Green Lantern, this series will always be at the top of collectors' want lists. No surprise here, but can the incredible demand continue?

• Spider-Man—*Amazing Spider-Man* #1 wall-crawls to $15,750, while *Amazing Fantasy* #15 swings to $21,500. However, *ASM* #101, the first appearance of Morbius, displays signs of returning to its market coffin due to poor sales and wilting fan interest. The price withered to $130 this month, down 20 bucks.

• *Spawn*—Hotter than a four-balled tomcat, demand for all issues remains high.



Starman **is the leading the pack of hot DC titles these days.**

• *Starman*—This well-written, thought-provoking DC series is heating up, with prices moving up across the board. A new trend, so keep watching!

• *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*—Shrinkage in the fanbase is causing this once-popular series to lose value. Have all the Turtle fans outgrown their shell? And if so, can Archie's upcoming new Turtles series bring 'em back?

• *X-Men* #1 (original series)—Riding the crest of demand for Silver Age keys, this undervalued first issue, which introduces the original X-Men, mutated to $4,200 this month.

• *X-Men Alpha*—Hotter than an M'Kraan Crystal on the fourth of July, both the regular edition and the gold version are strong at current price levels.

• *Zorro*—Lady Rawhide appearances in issues #3, #6 and #7 are on the move again this month, reflecting the craze for quality books from the Bad Girls genre. **W**

Jon Warren can be bribed with season tickets to the Tennessee Volunteer football games. Pass the word.

ers *were* equally distributed. We've corrected the listing in this month's price guide.

And we're *watching* the market, not creating it ("Market *Watchers*"—get it?), so we're only reporting the trends that we observe from our high and mighty post atop Mt. Ivory Price Guide Tower. If we affect the market at all, it's an after-effect. This is just one guru's opinion...what do all of *you* think?

Dear Know-it-Alls,

Let's see if you can help me out on this one! My grandparents, who are antique dealers, recently picked up a book at a garage sale. It's titled *Popeye and His Jungle Pet*, and is comic-sized with text and pictures. The inside cover has four dates: 1919, 1929, 1936 and 1937. The book was published by Whitman. It's in pretty good shape, with a few minor creases on the front. And hey! The back isn't even broken! Please tell me it was $20 well-spent.

Walter Burns
Dallas, TX

Whitman Publications published all sorts of comics and children's books starting in the 1930s, and continuing through today. They were the publishers of Big Little Books and Better Little Books, too. The fact that your Popeye book combines words and pictures makes it sound like a storybook, so I don't think it's from the Large Feature Comics series, and it's definitely not a Big Little Book. In any case, at $20 you got a true deal, because I haven't seen any Popeye storybooks from the 1930s priced at less than $100, and I have seen some as high as $400.

Dear Market Watchers,

The other day, I counted up my collection of *Conan the Barbarian* (I was hoping prices had gone up because the series had been canceled). Anyway, I can't find any price for my *Conan the Barbarian Book and Record Set*. It has a 45 rpm disc that plays the story "The Crawler in the Mists," and was released by Marvel. Can you tell me if it's worth anything?

Also, I've been thinking about selling my collection. Where is the best place to sell? How do I find a buyer? Should I sell my books as a group, or individually?

Craig S. Bolding
Hollister, CA

Looking into my crystal ball, I see a bright future for Conan comics, especially the early Barry Smith issues. Even though it was canceled back in '93, which usually spells doom for collector interest, the original *Conan the Barbarian* series is among those titles that'll stand the test of time. Your record set (Wonder if every reader out there knows what a 45 rpm record *is*?) is from an extensive series that Marvel published back in the 1970s, and prices for it run the gamut. I've seen these things at conventions with price tags of $10 to $25, depending on whose table they were sitting on.

As far as advice on selling your collection, I'm sorry, but I can't really help. The answers to the kind of questions you ask could fill a book, so I'll leave you with a piece of advice: Ask your local comics retailer to answer your questions with some pointers on how to get the best price.

That's all for this month, fellow Market Watchers. Tune in next month, when we'll make use of our unused cranial capacity to answer more puzzlers like the ones you just read. ■ *Jon Warren*

HEY, if you're scratchin' your head wonderin' about somethin' in the comic collecting world, ask the gurus at Market Watchers! Send your letters to:

MARKET WATCHERS
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064

e-mail address: JonRWarren@aol.com

TOP 100

The highest-ordered comic books for the month of SEPTEMBER.

Compiled by the *Wizard* Price Guide staff, and working off the data supplied by comic book retailers across the country, the following is a listing of the highest-ordered comics for September. Check out the column on the right for an explanation of this month's rankings.

1. **Uncanny X-Men #326 (Marvel)**
2. X-Men #46 (Marvel)
3. Spawn #36 (Image)
4. Wolverine #95 (Marvel)
5. Generation X #9 (Marvel)
6. Gen[13] #5 (Image)
7. Spawn: Blood Feud #4 (Image)
8. Wolverine/Gambit: Victims #3 (Marvel)
9. Uncanny X-Men '95 (Marvel)
10. X-Man #9 (Marvel)
11. Amazing Scarlet Spider #1 (Marvel)
12. Generation X '95 (Marvel)
13. Cable #25 (Marvel)
14. X-Force #48 (Marvel)
15. X-Men Dollar Book #1 (Marvel)
16. Scarlet Spider #1 (Marvel)
17. Spider-Man/Batman (Marvel/DC)
18. X-Factor #116 (Marvel)
19. Web of Scarlet Spider #1 (Marvel)
20. Spectacular Scarlet Spider #1 (Marvel)
21. Excalibur #91 (Marvel)
22. X-Files #9 (Topps)
23. Superman #106 (DC)
24. Adventures of Superman #529 (DC)
25. Superman: The Man of Steel #50 (DC)
26. Scarlet Spider Unlimited #1 (Marvel)
27. Batman #524 (DC)
28. Glory/Avengelyne #1 (Image)
29. X-Files Comics Digest #1 (Topps)
30. WetWorks #11 (Image)
31. Detective Comics #691 (DC)
32. Wonder Woman #103 (DC)
33. Action Comics #715 (DC)
34. Batman: Legends... Dark Knight #77 (DC)
35. Sandman #72 (DC)
36. Action Comics Annual #7 (DC)
37. Batman: Shadow of the Bat #44 (DC)
38. Green Goblin #1 (Marvel)
39. Underworld Unleashed #1 (DC)
40. Green Lantern #68 (DC)
41. Dawn #2 (Sirius)
42. Robin #22 (DC)
43. Venom: Sinner Take All #4 (Marvel)
44. Batman: Man-Bat #2 (DC)
45. Incredible Hulk #435 (Marvel)
46. Avengelyne/Glory #1 (Maximum)
47. Spider-Man: The Parker Years #1 (Marvel)
48. Grifter #5 (Image)
49. Azrael #10 (DC)
50. Catwoman #26 (DC)
51. Cyberforce #16 (Image)
52. Glory & Friends Bikini Fest #1 (Image)
53. X-Men 2099 A.D. #26 (Marvel)
54. Sovereign Seven #5 (DC)
55. Batman: Brotherhood of the Bat (DC)
56. Chaos! Quarterly #1 (Chaos!)
57. Flash #107 (DC)
58. Riptide #1 (Image)
59. Untold Tales of Spider-Man #3 (Marvel)
60. Velocity #1 (Image)
61. Aquaman #14 (DC)
62. Nightwing #3 (DC)
63. Star Wars: Tales of the Jedi-S. War #2 (D. Horse)
64. Superman: At Earth's End (DC)
65. Deathblow #20 (Image)
66. The Maxx #19 (Image)
67. StormWatch #28 (Image)
68. Superboy #21 (DC)
69. Fantastic Four #406 (Marvel)
70. Star Wars: X-Wing—Rogue S. #3 (Dark Horse)
71. Zealot #2 (Image)
72. Avengers #392 (Marvel)
73. What If? #79 (Marvel)
74. Youngblood (Vol. 2) #1 (Image)
75. New Warriors #65 (Marvel)
76. Glory #6 (Image)
77. Superboy Annual #2 (DC)
78. Ghost #6 (Dark Horse)
79. Starjammers #2 (Marvel)
80. Exiles: Infinity (Malibu)
81. Ballistic #3 (Image)
82. Star Wars: River of Chaos #4 (Dark Horse)
83. WildStorm! #2 (Image)
84. WildStar #1 (Image)
85. Spider-Man Adventures #12 (Marvel)
86. Punisher #1 (Marvel)
87. Blood Pool #2 (Image)
88. Prophet (Vol. 2) #2 (Image)
89. Savage Dragon #23 (Image)
90. Batman & Robin Adventures #1 (DC)
91. Kurt Busiek's Astro City #2 (Image)
92. Backlash #12 (Image)
93. Impulse #8 (DC)
94. Prime: Infinity (Malibu)
95. Berzerkers #2 (Image)
96. Chapel #2 (Image)
97. Spider-Man 2099 A.D. Special #1 (Marvel)
98. The Books of Magic #18 (DC)
99. Simpsons Comics #12 (Bongo)
100. Captain America #445 (Marvel)

(CE=Collector's Edition)

AT THE TOP:

Marvel's mutant titles captured a whopping seven out of the top 10 sellers, matching last month's phenomenal performance. Coming off the new X-team's 20th anniversary celebration, the line's two main books, *Uncanny X-Men* and *X-Men*, hold onto the top two positions. Meanwhile, *Spawn* has been the top-selling non-X-title for what seems like forever, and *Gen[13]*'s right-behind status is bordering on forever itself.

NEAR THE TOP:

The Superman and Spider-Man titles benefited from their respective big events, the Trial and the Scarlet Spider replacement. The huge crossover between Spidey and Batman had a solid showing at #17. *X-Files* has U-turned in the right direction by gaining a huge 57 notches this month, making it the top mover for September.

NEAR THE MIDDLE:

Wonder Woman, under John Byrne's guidance, placed at #32 this month, the absolute highest it's been in a very long time. At #41, Sirius' *Dawn* has again proved to be a strong contender by hitting Lady Death- and Shi-type numbers. The *Glory/Avengelyne* crossover book from Image (#28) outsold Maximum Press' version by 18 places, probably thanks to Image's name.

IN THE MIDDLE:

The Bad Girls still rule: Catwoman jumped 10 places higher than last month's #60; Chaos!'s latest Lady Death-plus book, *Chaos! Quarterly*, scored at #56; and Image's Riptide and Velocity did well at #58 and #60.

NEAR THE BOTTOM:

Two revamped super-teams did OK this month: Image's *Youngblood* and Malibu's *Exiles*. The large amount of Youngblood fans out there apparently didn't help the first book too much, and a number of Marvel mutants joining the Exiles group wasn't enough to take in a large number of buyers.

AT THE BOTTOM:

Two of DC's more fun books, *Batman & Robin Adventures* (the replacement for *Batman Adventures*) and *Impulse* have finally made the chart.

ATTENTION COMIC BOOK RETAILERS:

If you're a retailer who would like to participate in our compiling of the Top 100 (and be a candidate for special prizes), please write to us at the address below.

Top 100 Coordinator
c/o Wizard Press
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920-2064
or e-mail us at: WizardTGTC@aol.com

E.G.O.*

BY TODD McFARLANE

The Results are In!

I'd like to thank all of you who wrote in response to the question I posed in *Wizard* #46: What do you want from me? I expected to get a handful of letters, but quickly realized that I had grossly underestimated the number of monthly E.G.O. readers. I received hundreds of letters from people all over North America. It is good to know that there are so many people out there with strong opinions about comic books and the industry in general.

Almost all of the letters expressed the same concerns and ideas in certain areas. The collective opinions are as follows:

Variant covers are looked upon as unnecessary and devised solely to extract more money from readers. Crossovers are all right once in a while, but basically had a lukewarm response. Bringing in new characters to interact with Spawn is appealing (especially Angela and Violator). And most importantly, don't kill Spawn. You all seem to feel that this a cheap tactic employed by other books, and it is a bandwagon that I should avoid jumping on. (It was also pointed out to me that it's redundant to kill off someone who is technically already dead.) Many of you encouraged me to follow my creative instincts, and not be concerned with what everyone else is doing.

I appreciate your confidence in me to continue putting out an entertaining and innovative book each month. As I said earlier, we really received many more responses than I ever expected, and they were all damn fine letters. I felt it was no longer possible to determine the three "best" letters. Therefore, I randomly picked three letters out of the bunch, and determined them to be the "winners." Their names are printed below and some signed stuff is on the way to their homes. Again, thank you for taking the time to write in and share your opinions. It was very eye opening for me. Keep reading, and I'll see you next contest!

Prize Winners:

John Horne, Grenada, MS **Brian P. Bolvin**, Fairless Hills, PA **Greg Simons**, Cincinnati, OH

Here's a list of people who responded to *Wizard* #46's "What do you want from me?" column (As we are still receiving letters from that column, we've only listed those who responded *prior* to our deadline.):

Sanjiv Purba
Kristian Codaire
Curtis Sheidler
R.K. Wang
Iram Blajchman
Travis Skillings
Benjamin Todd Alpi
Brian Douglas
Ken Hellrung
Shawn Soucy
Armando Quiroz
David R. Bohlander
Michael Naugle
Mark Zinngrabe
Steve Ranger
Tim Robertson
Clint McCullough
Chris Bucklin
Josh Marse
J.R. Mounts
Adam Leonhardt
Andrew Wiles
Steve Geisler
Guy Rulz
Todd Hammond
Anthony R. Miller
Nela Nederhoff
Josh Shomo
David Sutherland
William Litzler
Michele Scott
William Paye III
Larry Miller
Penn Buffington
Matt Evans
Kyle Munroe
Keith P. Miller
Uwe Reber
Griffin L.Smith
William Powell
Zach Mackey
Cindy Neal
Joseph Rodgers
Kyle Heiberger
Tim Bennett
Kevin Costello
David McIntosh
Keegan Malone
Jeremy Konetsco
Patrick Lewis
Cas Kopacki
Brendan H. Fitzpatrick
Mark Altieri
David Zacki
John Thurmond
Brad Schuman
Hank DeHerder
John Falzone
Charles Paquette
Jay H. Fraser
Shannon Crowley
Jeff Geary
Henry Arauto
Christopher Walton
Justin Szewczyk
Ian Schiefelbein
Joshua Siegal
Mark McGee
Catarino Chavez
Wolf Stolzer
Tommy Garza
David R.P. Haig
Chris Weeden
Matt Nelson
Michael Askey
Greg Bowers
Drew T. Martin
Pat Boissonneau
Michael L. Johnson
Brent McKibben
Allan Browne
Cameron Tevis
Stephen Picard
Thomas James Harrington
Joe Hollon
Nick Miller
Jay Rist
Jonathan Ursin
Mark Wagner
John Webster III
Kevin Falcon
Jason Gorsalitz
Michael Askey
Doug Workman
Roland Corbin
Thomas Currier
Scott Laws
Brad Permenter
Steven Post
Devin O'Connor
Jeremy Lucas
Chuck Myers
Mario Vale
Robert A. Matthews
Jeffrey Y. Chang
Sean Avakian
Oliver Young
Mike Spitalieri
Jose China
Tim LeCompte
Anthony Bowman
Rich VanSledright
Andy "Violator" Chu
Ariel Estrada
Frank Glidden
David A. Caro
David McClain
Wes Curtsinger
Rohan Vaidya
Jason Kumpfmiller
Scott Baber
Michael C. Stiltz
William Johnson
Joey Borovicka
Adam B. Strom
Christopher Currie
Eric Smith
Jerry Howard
John Honn
John Colombo Jr.
Alex Hutchinson
Abayomi Williams
"Papa" John Such
Chris Chamblee
Josh Desrosiers
Tom Flynn
Frank Perez
Karim Helmy
Bill Wiltfong
Jeffrey L. Blaire
Arlyn Rankin
Stephen Dypiangco
John Bell
Tim Knopp
Anthony Aurelio
William Moore
David A. Caro
Eric Ipsen
Jonathan Hart
Derek H. Noonan
Kent Lorenz
Mary Ann Johnson
Frank Flood
Joshua Corum
Michael Scharff
T. Tran
Keith Litton
Andy Richardson
Josh Scruggs
Daniel Thomas
Jason G. Humblias
Andrew Chastain
Jeff Schlicht
Greg Guiang
Mark H. Anglin
Dave Wehry
Barry J. Rossheim
Dan Premo
Walter Romeo
Chris Furnier
Kyle Palkoner
"Uncle" Jay Murdock
Gary Patton
Rhea & Al Finger
A.J. Greenlee
Ryan Otto
Kevin Cogill Jr.
Joseph Richichi
David Richards
Ryan Paziuk
Jay Cook
Geoff Barclift
Bryan M. Peruski
Stephen LeCompte Jr.
David Gallo
Eric Johnson
Elena M.Carver
Dennis A. Brennan
Josh Hagen
Christian Sandoval
Devin Engelmann
Brian Dittfeld
Michael Campanella
David Johnson
Patch Brown
John M. Reichert
Steve James
Andrew Melbourne
Rocky Karlage
Tony Thornhill
Ken Languedoc
Thor McNeil
Edwin Rivera
Greg Easton
Jason Dingz
Thomas Schloendorn
Shana Phanek
Bobby Brooks
Mike Goodale
Michael Grimmett
Tim Fontaine
Juan A. Ortiz
Salvador S. Horquita Jr.
Jeremiah Lee
Ray Keener
Jeff Jacobs
Alex Teoh
Loyd Padgett
Mark Philips Torres
Leslie Lorenz
Ray Yanez
Mike Johnson Jr.
Tom Kary
James Zacharias
Nelly Cung
Hosho McCreesh
Michael A. Manzanares
Greg Rochon
Erik Ben-Zekey
Walden Wong
Freeman Wong
Richard A. Alexander
Peter Atsave
Danyel Rodriguez
Sunny Bjerk
Scott Moore
Duane Nichols
Ross Rosenberg
Aaron Buda
Scott Rose
Tom Drennen
Matt Suplee
Dan Morris
Patrick Ty
Chris Cole
Eric R. Rogusky
Lloyd Durall Jr.
Jacob Breaux
Jake Kilborn
John Giles Jr.
Branden C. Boetticher
Zach Blackburn
Doug Cadwallader
Tony Pellegrino
Laura M.McSpadden
Gustav Pettersson
Robert Feeney
David Sulsona
Randy Ryan Tan
Jonathan A. Ottenberg
Molly Kiely
Greg Cryer
Rob Kraneveldt
Jason D. Ventura
Eric Liou
Gerardo Madera
Dylan Perrin
Tracy Jefferson
Ben Bermudez
Tim Grossen
Danny Spaulding
Junichi Hiraiwa
Henry Duiker
Daniel Ward
Tyrone Warner
Eric Carlsson
Shane Titchenal
Adam Cantrell
Dave Thomas
Adam Scudiere
Dan Taylor
Jeff Swetland
Josh Provorse
Richard Peck
Paul Botts
Joe McClure
Bryan Strahan
Andy Maglothin
Chris Schacht
Chris Menzel
Ryan Duncan
Sean Gates
Chris Schaal
Mr. A. Blatch
Ben Miles
Carl Adamoli Jr.
Aaron Perkins
Jose Enrique Sandoval III
Raj Paul Tuli
Kevin Onofrio

David Escalante
Scott Peckins
Jeffrey Banks
Anthony Cole
Travis Kacmar
Travis Lanham
Steven Shaw
Jason E. Mumpower
Gloria Calderon
Patrick Payne
Jerry Li Niu
Jason Massar
Angelo Tarallo
Tom Hanley
Mike Richards
Jason "Filo" Korolenko
Victor Rosado
Glen Lees
Mauricio Hunt
Guillermo Vigil
Rodney W. Garcia
Brian Dortch
Ray Hoey
Walter Weimer
Jeffrey Pittman
J.P. Thomas
Ken Burdon
Joe Obyrcki
Patrick Cass
M. Lonigan
Ulysses J. Cooper
Ron Allman
Joshua Simon
Philippe Benoit
Lanceford Brown
Brian Koval
Daniel Pappalardo
Stephen Paulson
Harry Thomas
Adam Scott McCabe
Bob Curtis
Lorene Samida-Braun
David Lewis
Rudy J. Mariscal
Chuck Hughes
Chris Robinson
Steven R. Rodimon
Fred Valentin
Nathaniel Daneshrad
John Patrick Hardin
Kevin Fritz
Mike Hagan
Domingues De Matos
Luis "Cartoon" Carrion
Kevin Laird
Aldric J. Saucier
Dan Coates
James Gutierrez
Stephen Emery
Travis Molinar
Dan Boston
Alan Hayes
Danny Cox
Aarik Miller
Jeff Jack
Ryan Pownall
Dominic DeMarte
Eric Gaillant
Charles Gil
Wayne Burnette
Bruce Hatten
Terry M. Hulett
Travis Dewys
Pablo Orozco
Jeff Hord
John C. Stout
Josh Larson
Travis West
Tim Ross
Danny Anzion
Tony Cromer
Jamey Sweeney
Troy Hall
Will Bennett
Kenny Nakai
Bill Webber
Patrick Millet

In *Wizard* #47's E.G.O. I asked you for a detailed explanation of why you keep going back to your comic store. Again, there is no right or wrong, best or worst answer. Out of the *hundreds* of letters, I've printed a random two.

Todd,

I remember standing by the comic book rack, waiting for someone to cut the plastic twine that bound them to their peaceful rest. When the packages had burst open I was the first one to touch the new pages. Soon I was working hard and steady to pay for my exploding interest.

Late in 1990, I stopped. I was losing touch with Spider-Man, and Batman had spiraled into his own eddy after the "A Lonely Place of Dying" and "Year 3" stories. I ordered the new Batman series [*Batman: Shadow of the Bat*] from DC and instead they sent me *Sleepwalker* (which is an OK comic, but not what I wanted). My time of frenzy collecting had faded to death.

A few days ago (June '95), I stopped by a comic store in Great Falls, Mont. The store is simply called "Action" and the man who runs it is Brooks Kelly. I was looking for *Batman* #417 and #419. He didn't have those two, but he seemed to take it as a personal challenge to round them up for me. Together we talked about how comics have changed. I mentioned I didn't like the new format of DC's comics with the glossy pictures. They seem to look like a tin top off a pop can in the sunlight. From a distance it looks like silver treasure, but when you bend down to pick it up you find dull garbage.

He didn't agree or disagree. Instead, he turned me around to a positive attitude of present comics. He asked me if I'd heard of *Spawn*. I told him I never even heard of Image Comics. He took his time to tell me a brief history of Image.

At that point I left him to look around the shop. On the wall was *Spawn* #2-#13. I picked up *Spawn* #3 and went to the cash register. Brooks told me he might have a #1 in back. He took more time out to hunt for the comic. After ransacking his shop in vain, he took out his own collection of *Spawn*. He took out #1, and without hesitation, thrust it into my hands. I carefully looked through the pages of my new comic.

Needless to say I walked out of that shop with a smile on my face. Brooks wasn't out to make a buck; he was just willing to lend out a helping hand. What he made was a new customer, and one kid feel satisfied.

Rodrigo S. DeAlvarado Rigg
225 2nd Ave S. Apt. #2
Shelby, MT 59474

Dear Mr. McFarlane,

This letter is in response to your latest inquiry in your E.G.O. column about what keeps me going back to my same comic book store. Just one word: Sara. (With no offense to Bryan).

Sara is the embodiment of what every comic retailer should be. She's very personable, very knowledgeable and a fun person to be around. I truly feel my best interests are in her heart when we do business together. Her love of the comic industry (creation, not commercialism) is the first thing that struck me as I got to know her.

Being an aspiring artist/writer/creator herself, she speaks from experience, not just observation. I trust her judgment and advice in comics as I do my mother's advice on manners. I have no fear of being steered wrong. I am a "pull and hold" customer at Sara's store along with well over a hundred other people. Sara is in charge of the "pull and hold" accounts. She very rarely misses a step, week in and week out. She knows I am a diehard Image fan and I collect all the titles. She makes sure I get all the issues, including the variant covers (thank you, *Gen*^{13}) and even some autographs from the WildStorm crew.

If something is amiss, she is quick to correct it. She takes the worry out of me on those "gotta have" issues. If I need a question answered or I want an opinion, Sara fits the bill. Boy, does she have opinions. Just ask her about Trent Reznor or Marvel Comics. One of the things I like most about her is her willingness to give an opinion. Too many people are afraid to speak out for fear of being heard. And when she does talk, she is sincere. I've come across several people at other stores who come across as phony and don't realize it or don't care. These people have their "in-crowd" and "walk-in" customers and there is a marked difference in treatment.

With Sara, conversations may be longer or more in depth with a regular but I've never seen any customer leave feeling ignored or inferior. That is what is so special about Sara and why she commands my loyalty to her store. She cares about her customers and understands that she and her customers are together because of a love of comics. There is a lot to like and dislike about the current comic industry. She'll converse with me in either direction.

There's a lot to do to keep her store running. She'll put in long hours to make sure it is done. There are a lot of little things a person can do to make customers feel welcomed and at ease asking questions.

Sara does those things. Whether it be offering recommended reading, slaving to put out a monthly newsletter, or simply taking the time to wish Martha Washington and a certain unnamed customer a Happy Birthday, Sara does it all. Best of all, when I pull my wheelbarrow up to her counter with this week's "pull and holds," she doesn't look at me like the lunatic she must think I am.

Philip D. Hurtt
13755 Tobiasson Rd.
Poway, CA 92064

Well, thanks for writing, everyone. I'll see you next month. W

Todd McFarlane can be found every month in the pages of his comic, Spawn, *published by Image Comics. He thinks blue M&Ms are cool.*

*EVERYONE'S GOT OPINIONS

The opinions expressed in this column are not necessarily those of *Wizard: The Guide to Comics*, its editorial staff or Image Comics.

TRAILER PARK

Wizard's column about Hollywood and TV and stuff like that

SPAWN MOVIE set to shoot this fall

THE **SPAWN** MOVIE WILL BE SHOOTING SOON...

Todd McFarlane's long-awaited Spawn movie is scheduled to shoot in September and October in San Francisco, following approval of the fourth and final script draft. But don't expect the movie any time soon—more than 10 months' worth of special effects will still be needed, meaning the final product probably won't be ready until at least Thanksgiving 1996.

Produced by Clint Goldman of Industrial Light & Magic, the movie is being directed by Mark Dippe, the special effects wizard behind *T2: Judgment Day* and *Jurassic Park*. Distributed by New Line Cinema, the shooting budget for the flick is estimated at $40 million. McFarlane is serving as executive producer on the movie, while his right-hand man, Terry Fitzgerald, acts as associate producer.

McFarlane is aiming for a PG-13 rating for the movie, but he hesitated at saying he'd cut or edit scenes if the ratings board handed out an R. However, an early rewrite focused on changing a scene near the climax that everyone agreed was too gruesome, he noted.

Fitzgerald reported that the release date may be moved back depending on several factors still up in the air, including the special-effects schedule and marketing concerns. "We're discussing the possibility of holding it for release in the summer of 1997," Fitzgerald revealed. "But it would need a much bigger budget to compete in that period." No cast members had been signed by press time, but *Wizard* offered its own suggestions in its Casting Call in issue #50.

The plot tells Spawn's origin and introduces the key characters in his story, leading to a confrontation between Spawn and the comic's Terry Fitzgerald, who is married to Al (Spawn) Simmons' widow. Spawn also battles the Clown and the Violator and winds up facing down the Malebolgia in the climax. "The best part of the whole movie is the Clown," Fitzgerald said. "Everything he says is both scary and funny. He's got all the best lines."

How does it end? "Everybody dies," Fitzgerald laughed. That doesn't reveal much, considering most of these guys were dead to begin with. ■ *Craig Shutt*

SUPERMAN GETS ANIMATED

The Man of Steel will soar into an animated run beginning in September 1996, when the "Batman & Robin" duo of writer Paul Dini and animator Bruce Timm reteam to bring Superman to the Warner Bros. Network.

"He's the next big gun that Warner has in the superhero arena," explained Dini of his and Timm's return to small-screen superherodom. "What they were looking for in a television series was a big draw, and Superman is definitely a big draw."

The Superman animated series will debut with 13 half-hour episodes, and an additional 52 episodes are scheduled to be added in the fall of '97. Needless to say, much of the show's particulars are in a state of developmental flux. Dini claimed that the look of Superman "is still being debated," but mentioned that this Superman show, like its animated Bat-predecessor, will be a sort of greatest hits reflection of the comic book.

"Like Batman, we're looking to take classic elements of Superman that everybody has come to know over the years and put together a series made out of those elements. We want to look at the whole history of Superman and take the things we like about the mythos that work the best dramatically and visually for us, and make our series around those elements."

Dini reported that the core classic characters of Clark Kent, Lois Lane, Jimmy Olsen and Perry White will be on board and that there will also be appearances by such modern players as Maggie Sawyer and Dan Turpin. While he couldn't say

PATRICK STEWART AS MR. FREEZE? MAKE IT SO!

much about the relationship betweeen Clark and Lois, he noted during the Superman forum at July's San Diego Comic Con that they'll be heated rivals in the beginning.

The writer indicated that the series will also feature some *World's Finest*-type crossovers between Supes and Batman. "We're still debating [over] which characters we want on the show. We don't want DC superheroes working with Superman whose powers closely parallel his, although we're not opposed to villains who are just as strong as he is. Originally we wanted Batman to appear sometime in the first 13 episodes, but now it looks like it won't happen until 1997."

Dini offered that there has been no casting at this point and that the characters "are still in development," so he could not address the rumor that some core characters like Jimmy might be played more modern. "What I can tell you is that visually the show will not be as dark as Batman and that the show will not be camp. At least not intentionally."

He added that an animated Superman movie is not out of the question. "I also know that the studio wants to do another live-action Superman [film], and that all kinds of storylines have been debated including some, like the Death and Return, that have appeared in the comics."

Dini said that some Batman direct-to-video animated features (including possibly a Batman Christmas Special and adaptation of the *Mad Love* comic) are possible, "but right now everybody is too busy working on Superman." ■ *Marc Shapiro*

BATMAN AND ROBIN RETURN

Sources have confirmed for *Wizard* that Joel Schumacher will return as director for the fourth live-action Batman movie. The movie, which might be called *Batman and Robin*, could begin production as early as next fall for a summer 1997 release, leaving only a two-year gap between films, as opposed to the three years between *Batman* and *Batman Returns* and then *Batman Returns* and *Batman Forever*.

According to *Daily Variety*, Schumacher is bringing back *Batman Forever* co-writer Akiva Goldsman to script the fourth film. The villains will be Mr. Freeze and Poison Ivy, with Patrick Stewart (Capt. Picard on "Star Trek: The Next Generation") mentioned as a possible Mr. Freeze and Demi Moore and Julia Roberts as early candidates for Poison Ivy.

Val Kilmer and Chris O'Donnell will likely return as Batman and Robin.

Batman Forever has made more than $178 million domestically and $300 million worldwide since its June 16 release. ■ *Rob Allstetter*

Patrick Stewart photo courtesy of Everett Collection

A SAVAGE SERIES

The USA Network has delayed the premiere of *The Savage Dragon* animated series, based on Erik Larsen's Image comics characters, until October 21. The series, a late pick-up, comes from Universal, and creators have been scrambling since May.

Story editor and writer Duane Capizzi said,that in many aspects, *The Savage Dragon* will be more of a cop show than a superhero show, focusing on the Dragon and fellow police officers Alex Wild and Frank Darling. Episodes will stand on their own and can be viewed in any order.

"We decided to take the straight-and-narrow route," said Capizzi. "The episodes are like mini-*Die Hards*. It will be action-packed and it will be exciting."

The Overlord and Vicious Circle will figure prominently in *The Savage Dragon*. Barbaric from Freak Force and She-Dragon will both appear during the series' first season of 13 episodes.

"In designing the Dragon, Erik Larsen has a unique style, but it doesn't translate well in animation," said producer Dan Fausett. "We went through 30 character designs early in the process, but we finally did get it right. It is loyal to the comic and works in animation.

"Although we're tempering the violence, we're keeping the action pretty heavy. There's nothing slow about it, and there's a lot of storytelling within the context of the action."

Jim Cummings, an animation veteran, does the voice of the Dragon. ■ *Rob Allstetter*

A NEW CROW TAKES FLIGHT

The success of *The Crow* live-action movie, based on James O'Barr's comic book characters, has spawned a sequel—and more controversy.

Production was expected to begin in Los Angeles on October 2 for *The Crow: City of Angels*. As has been the case since the making of *The Crow*, an unsettling air follows this franchise.

Some fans are upset about a sequel, saying it tarnishes the memory of Brandon Lee, the star of the first movie who died following an on-set shooting accident. O'Barr himself has been extremely reticent to back the project, saying he wants to steer it as far away from the first movie as possible. "That was Brandon's movie," he said.

Like *The Crow*, *City of Angels* will be produced by Edward R. Pressman Productions and distributed by Miramax/Dimension Films, with a late spring release planned. Tim Pope, a British music video director who is making his feature-film debut, directs from a script by David S. Goyer.

"The basic thrust of the film concerns Sarah, now an adult—and a brooding symbolist painter—living in a mythical version of Los Angeles," Goyer said. "Sarah finds her-

THE **SAVAGE DRAGON** TV SERIES WILL HIT THE SCREEN SOON.

DREW BARRYMORE—MAYBE—AND VINCENT PEREZ WILL DO **CROW** SEQUEL

self plagued by dreams of the 'new' Crow's death and is ultimately drawn to the place where he died. Their relationship is the core of the film.

"The villain is a Byronic chap named Judah Earl, who has had premonitions of his own death—a death which involves the Crow."

The film stars Vincent Perez as Ashe, an entirely new lead character. The Eric Draven character will not appear in the sequel. Perez is a French heartthrob whose credits include *Indochine*, *Queen Margot* and *Talk of Angels*.

As for the role of Sarah, Drew Barrymore and musician Tori Amos were mentioned as candidates, but Mia Kershner (*Exotica*) has the inside track for the role.

Pope realizes the impact Lee's performance had on fans and the task ahead.

"What this is not going to be is a *Crow 2*," he said. "We're using the last movie as a springboard. We're going into the purity of James' work. We're going further in instead of further away.

"I don't want to defile [Lee's] memory, and I don't want to forget Brandon or the impact the last movie had, but we [must] move on. We're being fresh. We're bringing as much energy and texture to the film as we can. The mantle of *The Crow* moves on to a new character, another innocent victim."

That victim will be played by Perez, a choice Pope said will help steer *City of Angels* away from *The Crow*.

"He is really different. In meeting actors for this film, they all seemed like the brother of Brandon," Pope said. "He will be a different version of The Crow, a reworking of The Crow. He has a different background than Brandon, and I hope he will do something people like."

One of the holdovers from *The Crow* is designer Alex McDowell, who earned raves for his urban gothic design in the first film. He also won the overwhelming approval of O'Barr for the sequel.

Pope noted that water imagery will play a large role in *City of Angels*, that the film will take place over the Day of the Dead Festival and that Los Angeles will represent the edge of the world.

Goyer is a longtime comics fan who is working on several movie projects on Marvel-based characters, including Doctor Strange, Blade, Ghost Rider and Venom. Although he worked 12 to 14 hours a day preparing the *City of Angels* script, he hasn't been insulated from the controversy, monitoring response on the computer networks. He even received an e-mail death threat because of *City of Angels*.

"What brought me to *The Crow* was the insane challenge of this intimidating opportunity to do something the same, but completely different," said Goyer, who called *City of Angels* the best script he's ever written. "The audience is going to come away from this movie feeling that it's actually another chapter in a much bigger saga. It's not just an action movie or a special effects movie, and it's not just a love story. It's all of those things, and I think that's what's interesting about this film." ■ *Rob Allstetter and Marc Shapiro*

IMAGE'S OTHER MEDIA MOVES

Rob Liefeld's Youngblood characters may finally make it to network television. The FOX Network is contemplating a Youngblood show that would be developed by Graz Entertainment, which produced "X-Men" and is also developing a Cyberforce show for FOX.

"If it is a go, it will likely be a mini-series of four to six episodes," said Marty Isenberg, who wrote a series bible and network-approved pilot episode with partner Bob Skir. "If they are successful, I assume it will go on to be a series."

The Youngblood television roster will consist of Sentinel, Shaft, Chapel, Badrock, Vogue and Riptide. Psi-Fire is written into the pilot episode, but will not be a permanent member of the team.

Isenberg and Skir have written for "Batman: The Animated Series," "X-Men" and "Spider-Man." They also wrote four episodes and served as story editors for the first season of the syndicated "UltraForce" series from DIC.

And ShadowHawk?

"There is a live-action ShadowHawk television show in development with Wesley Snipes' production company," said ShadowHawk creator Jim Valentino. "Whether it makes it to television is anybody's guess.

"I'm not actively pursuing it. It's not what I'm about. I've always been reluctant to deal with Hollywood. In fact, I don't like to deal with Hollywood."

On the other side of Image, the direct-to-video *Gen*[13] animated movie will be released in two versions, said WildStorm Productions' marketing director Jeff Mariotte.

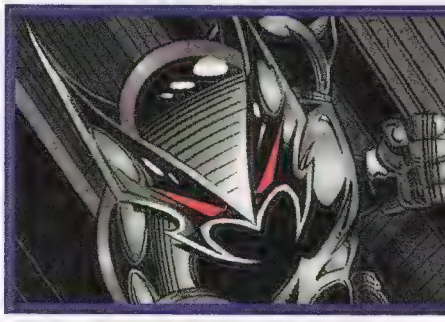
Disney will distribute a version that will likely be rated PG. The other version, rated PG-13 or R, will go to the direct market. Both will be available in the late spring or summer of 1996.

The movie, which has a $2 million budget, is being overseen by Kevin Altieri, an animation veteran who directed 26 episodes of "Batman: The Animated Series/The Adventures of Batman and Robin."

Mariotte said WildStorm has also optioned the Gen[13] characters for a live-action film. ■ *Rob Allstetter*

'TREK' NEWS

Trekkie alert: If you've been longing to revisit the cast of "The Next Generation," the wait might not be for long. Patrick Stewart, our stalwart Captain Picard, admits that script writers are working on another sequel. "The cast is interested in coming together again," said Stewart, whose post-Trek career "will probably surprise many of the 'Star Trek' fans, but I hope that they'll stick with me and have an open mind." He played a gay interior decorator in *Jeffrey* and also has a winter romance coming out. Concerning the *Trek* sequel, the actor said, "I have no idea of the plot, but it would be the first movie with all 'Next Generation' stars, now that Kirk is dead." Would Stewart ever like Picard himself to go to the happy space hunting station in the sky? "Of course. I want Picard to die someday on screen. Like the old saying, 'All good things must come to an end.' And, 'Whatever lives must die eventually.'" Stewart then remembered another saying, though: "Of course, there's the old adage, 'Death in a "Star Trek" movie is never forever.'" ■ *Cindy Pearlman* W



SHADOWHAWK'S OWN CREATOR MIGHT KEEP HIM FROM HOLLYWOOD.

Drew Barrymore and Vincent Perez photos courtesy of Everett Collection

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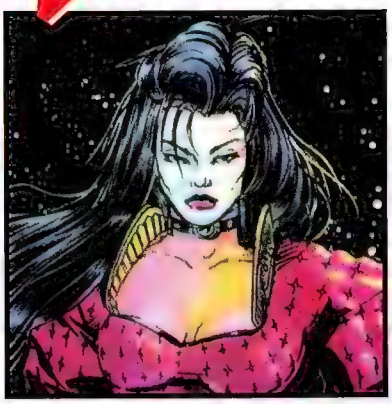
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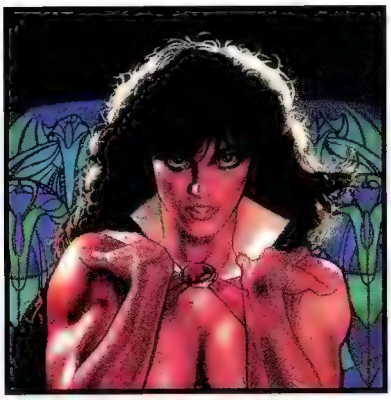
VAMPIRELLA®

REWARD:

The hottest **Wizard Special** ever, including a Lady Death/Shi/Vampirella jam poster and a preview of Pamela Anderson's *Barb Wire* movie. On sale in December.

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JUNK DRAWER

Little bits of everything that we couldn't stretch into a full-page newsy thing

AN IMAGE TOY EXPLOSION

Coming this fall from McFarlane Toys is an assortment of Spawn-related toys along with new Youngblood additions and a WetWorks assortment.

New additions to the Spawn family will be Spawn II, Violator II, Redeemer, The Curse, Future Spawn, Vertebreaker, Cosmic Angela and Ninja Spawn.

On the Youngblood side, in addition to the previously released Badrock and Chapel, we'll see Shaft, Diehard, Sentinel, Troll, Dutch and Crypt. Now aficionados can have a whole team to play with!

As for the all-new WetWorks toy line, expect to see Dane, Mother One, Dozer, Grail, Vampire and Werewolf.

And if spring fever is starting to hit ya (and that's *real* early!), McFarlane Toys already has its spring line of Spawn toys in the works. The line up includes Sam Kieth's Maxx which comes with either a white Isz or the rarer black Isz, and a real feather headdress as an accessory is still being considered. Also featured will be Jim Valentino's original ShadowHawk; a She-Spawn; a Spawn featuring camouflage armor (the final design of which is still being discussed); a new Clown, featuring lots of guns and a toy balloon in his hand; and Ape-X, a fearsome half-gorilla, half-cyborg character who makes his debut in issue #38.

redeemer

crypt

dane

And if you think that's it for Image Comics toys, you're sadly mistaken. McFarlane Toys has acquired the rights to do toys based on Jim Lee's ultra-hot title, *Gen*[13]. Before you start running to the store though, these teens aren't due until late next year.

And finally, Playmates has added two more figures to its WildC.A.T.s line: Maxx Cash and Slag. The company also has added a Savage Dragon line, which will have about five figures, but details are still sketchy. Known figures so far are Battle Dragon, She-Dragon, Ballistic and a normal Savage Dragon. ■ *Craig Shutt & Sean Aune*

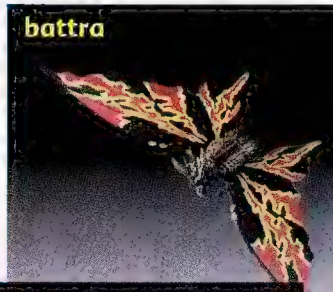
G.I. JOE COMES HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Hasbro/Kenner has announced another exclusive 12-inch G.I. Joe figure for this holiday season. The newest one, available only at FAO Schwarz stores and through its catalog, will be a fully poseable Navy S.E.A.L.

This figure will be packaged with a tiger stripe camouflage uniform with combat boots, hat, dog tags, 9MM sidearm in holster, automatic weapon with a "silencer," two hand grenades, boot holster with knife, backpack kit and hydration canteen in holster. The biggest accessory of this package will be a "motorized" mission raft. The expected retail price for this pup is $85. ■ *Sean Aune*

GO, GO, GODZILLA!

Beware, Tokyo! Trendmasters is returning with more Godzilla toys. This time around the big green guy will have to contend with three nasty monsters: Gigan, Biollante and Battra.

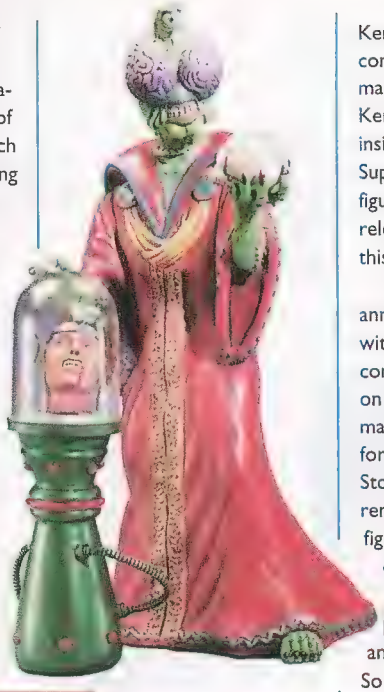

battra

gigan

Gigan is a three-winged, one-eyed creature who's controlled by a group of evil aliens known as Nebula Space Hunter M. Next up is the evil plant creature known as Biollante who was bred by the scientist Dr. Shiragami to be an indestructible plant. And finally, Battra was created thousands of years ago to destroy Mothra, but he's not

afraid to take on the King of Monsters either!

All three of the new creatures will come in a variety of formats. Ten-inch and six-inch versions will be available along with two-figure packs: Dark Thunder Godzilla vs. Biollante, Classic Thunder Godzilla vs. Gigan, and Dark Thunder Godzilla vs. Battra. ■ *Sean Aune*



THE MARTIANS ARE COMIN'

Screamin' Products Incorporated has announced a series of model kits based on the popular trading card and comic book series Mars Attacks!

There will be six model kits—three single figures and three dioramas—which will range in price from $49.95 to $86.95. "Target Earth" ($49.95) will feature a brainy Martian leader holding a globe of the Earth in his right hand while stabbing at New York City with a dagger in his left. The "Attacking Martian" ($54.95) will have a Martian in a fully detailed space suit including backpack, clear bubble helmet and ray gun. "Air Assault Martian" ($54.95) is similar to the "Attacking Martian" kit, but includes a jet backpack so that this Martian will swoop down from the skies.

The first diorama kit is "Slaughter in the Streets" ($64.95). This set will include a street corner with mail box, fire hydrant, dead dog, newspapers, charred bodies, a blasted-in-half police officer and an "Air Assault Martian." The second diorama is entitled "No Place To Hide" ($64.95). This set includes an "Attacking Ground Assault Martian," rumbling wall, litter, rats and two teenage girls, one of which has been blasted and the other is hiding from a Martian. The final diorama is "Terror In The Sky" ($86.95). This 16-inch diameter flying saucer will have a clear dome bubble top with a fully detailed cockpit and pilot. ■ *Sean Aune*

SUPERMAN MEETS STAR WARS

No, it's not a crossover between the Force and the Man of Steel (though, that might be kinda neat), but it is two cool things coming from Kenner/Hasbro. We can now confirm that there *is* a Superman toy line coming from Kenner/Hasbro. A source inside DC Comics revealed Superman, Superboy and Steel figures are scheduled for release. Expect to see them this Christmas.

Kenner/Hasbro has also announced an exclusive deal with the Kellogg's cereal company. You'll find an offer on the backs of specially marked boxes of Froot Loops for a Han Solo in Stormtrooper uniform with removable helmet. To get this figure you must send in the original coupon from the box, along with two proofs of purchases from any box of Froot Loops. So...follow your nose! ■ *Sean Aune & staff reports*

MARVEL GOES CD-ROM

As part of its effort to make the Marvel Comics characters more recognizable to the general public, Marvel's Toy Biz division will be bringing you a series of Marvel Interactive CD-ROM comics. The CDs, which will be PC and Macintosh compatible, will be distributed through comic book and software stores, major toy retailers and the toy departments of major mass retailers starting in late summer.

The first four CDs will feature the characters from the X-Men, Spider-Man, Fantastic Four and Iron Man comic books. Storylines will be from out-of-print classic tales of these characters with enhanced coloring, narration, sound effects, music and even animation. In addition to the look of these CD-ROM comics, the CD-ROM technology will take these stories to a new dimension, as the stories will become interactive with any user and involve him or her in the story. ■ *Henry Colonna*

paint the galaxy

If you've always wanted a cool model kit but never bought one because you didn't want to paint it, you can now breathe a little easier.

Polydata has released pre-painted Luke Skywalker and Obi Wan Kenobi model kits. These Star Wars kits stand approximately 12 inches in height, are easy to assemble, come in attractive numbered boxes and cost $34.95 apiece. Coming later this fall are a Sand Person, Chewbacca and Princess Leia models. But what about Boba Fett, the most notorious and coolest-looking bounty hunter this side o' the galaxy? Fear not, Polydata plans to release him, Han Solo and a few other characters throughout 1996.

more

JUNK DRAWER

BREAKIN' INTO COMICS

Ever wonder how Stan Lee got started in comics? Or Peter David, Scott McCloud or even John Byrne? Well, wonder no more! Coming this November from Boardwalk Press is the 170-page softcover *Pro-Motion: How Today's Creators Broke into Comics...and their Advice to You!*

Besides some pretty interesting interviews with over 70 creators in the comics field, *ProMotion* includes an illustrated guide to self-publishing by Matt Feazell and an extended interview with Jerry Ordway on how to submit your work to major publishers. If you can't find *ProMotion* at your local comic store, send $17.95 to Boardwalk Press, P.O. Box 362, Wynnewood, PA 19096.

REFLUX BRINGS COMICS TO LIFE

Inverse Ink has introduced *Reflux*, the industry's first interactive computer comic. This quarterly series follows the adventures of renegade Frank Lux as he journeys through Silicon Valley. Along with original art, animation and music, you'll also get full motion video sequences. The first few chapters will make use of footage from Chinese martial arts films, and future issues will integrate everything from Mexican wrestling movies (*¡Ay, caramba!*) to Pakistani adventure films! Talk about your diversity.

The first chapter of *Reflux*, entitled "The Becoming," is already out in stores. Look for chapter two, "The Threshold," to ship in October. *Reflux* is available in both PC and Macintosh CD-ROM versions for only $19.95.

CHRISTMAS WITH THE DEVIL

Well, not exactly, but now you can share the Christmas spirit with those nasty characters from Chaos! Comics: Lady Death, Evil Ernie and yes, even Smiley the Psychotic Button! These limited-edition ornaments were sculpted by the clay master himself, Clayburn Moore and are individually hand painted. These festive ornaments retail for $19.95 (except Smiley, who's only $14.95!) and ship in November. So go light up your Christmas tree and spread some holiday lovin'.

WOLVERINE ON LINE ONE, SIR

Now you can pick up your phone, answer some wacky questions about your favorite Marvel mutants or even that wall-crawlin' Spider-Man and win yourself some prizes. Global Telecommunication Solutions has joined Marvel to help create the Marvel Interactive Battle Pack. The pack includes a touch-tone game card that lets players call an 800 number and answer a variety of super-hero-related questions, three Hero Caps (y'know, those silly little things called POGs), and a mini comic book & storage case to hold the game card and caps. The game pack, available in either Spider-Man or X-Men versions, retails for $19.95.

YOU'LL FLIP FOR THESE COMICS

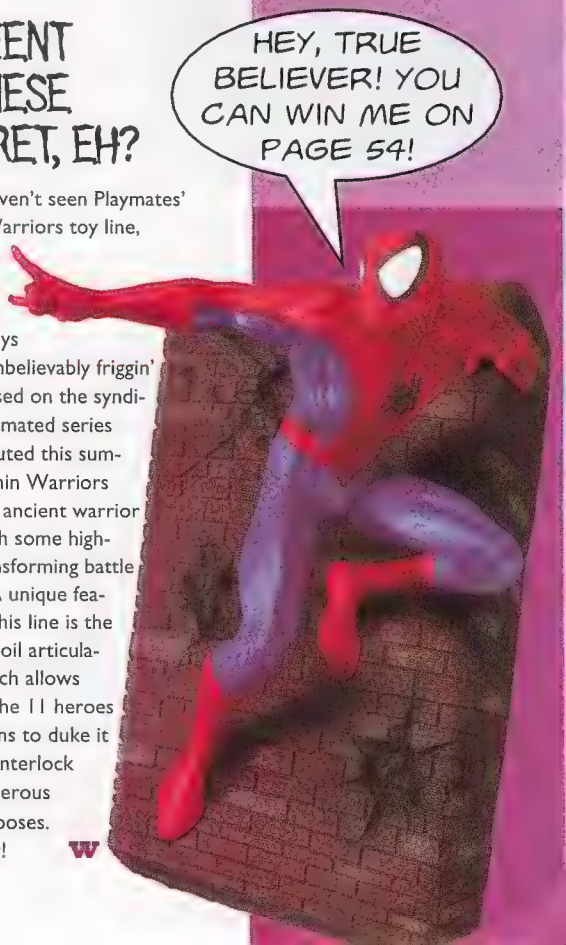
Running out of wall space at your store or even bedroom? Well, your prayers have been answered. Specialty Store Services is now offering the comic book flip frame which enables you to display your comics without damaging them. For $89.95, you get one rack and 36 frames which allow customers or friends (the kind that always have sticky peanut butter hands) to easily view your comics without ever actually touching them. The flip frames are made of a durable plastic that can be mounted to almost any wall. (Hey! Sounds like a challenge!) For more information call 1-800-999-0771. And tell 'em Skippy sent ya!

ANCIENT CHINESE SECRET, EH?

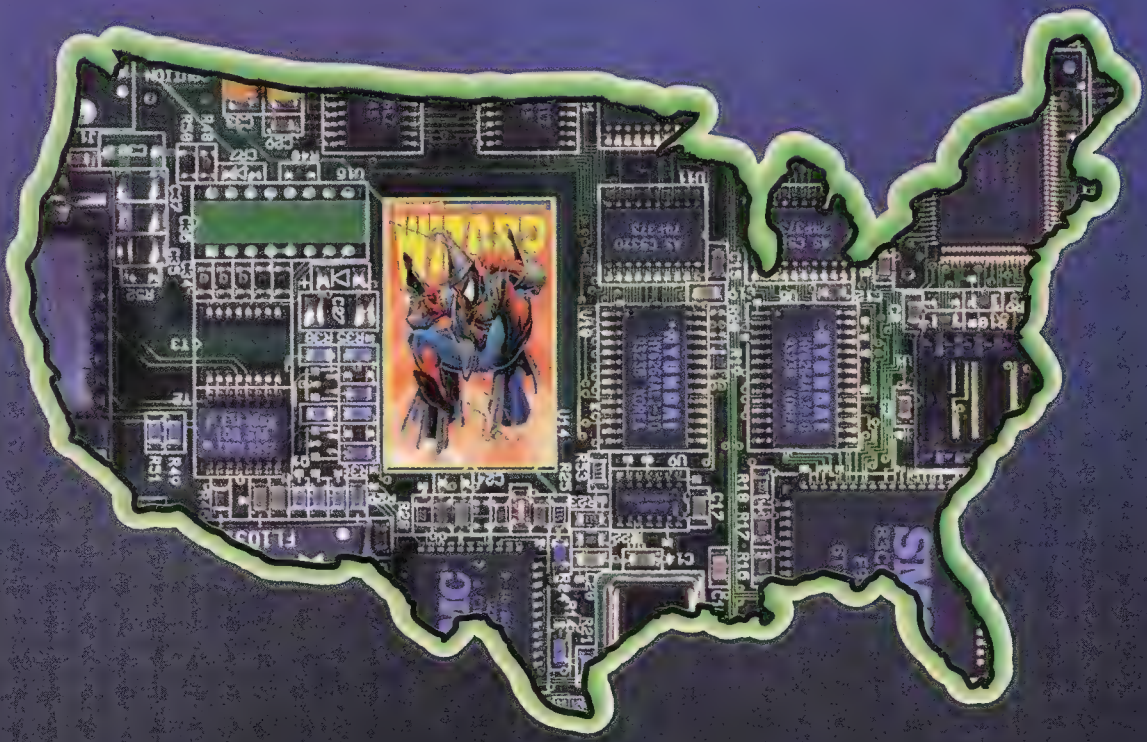
If you haven't seen Playmates' Ronin Warriors toy line, you're a moron! These toys are so unbelievably friggin' cool! Based on the syndicated animated series that debuted this summer, Ronin Warriors combine ancient warrior skills with some high-tech transforming battle armor. A unique feature to this line is the Power Coil articulation, which allows each of the 11 heroes and villains to duke it out and interlock into numerous samurai poses. Go crazy! W

HANGIN' WITH THE MAN! SPIDER-MAN, THAT IS!

Hey, neat! Check out Creative License's porcelain Spider-Man wall sculpture. Designed and sculpted by Randy Bowen, Spidey actually hangs on a wall and is poised for action. Each figure is individually casted, hand-painted, numbered and comes with a certificate of authenticity. Be on the lookout for future wall sculptures including Iron Man and The Beast.



Wire Into Wizard



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bullpen

ONE HUGE WOMAN!

The dust has settled and the rolls of fat have stopped rippling, signaling the end of the second thrilling Jelly Gauntlet. As reported last month, Wizard Press Online Editor Buddy Scalera and accountant Jeff Petrik decided to see who could lose the highest amount of weight in a one-month period. After assuring everyone that he was going to come out on top, one too many trips to the pork rind jar cost Jeff the win. The final tally: Jeff only lost 12 big ones to Buddy's bigger 15. And as a merciless clause of the Jelly Gauntlet, the loser had to come in and work a full day as a woman. Amid comments of "Geez, who's the ugly broad?" and "Hey, baby, how much?" the slightly slimmer Jeff showed us that you can lose miserably, cross-dress (even if you go weak and wear a T-shirt under your dress) and still hold your chins up high. So what did the loser have to say? "It was cool to get in touch with my feminine side." Hey, maybe Jeff *is* the real winner after all.

Kate Torpey and Karen Evora show Jeff that makeup *can* be fun!

WHAT ANNOYED US THIS MONTH

Two words: plastic capes. Ever since we were all little Wizardites, we wished there were cool Marvel action figures. Well, Toy Biz is doing a staggeringly awesome job of capturing Marvel's characters as figures, with one exception: They all have plastic capes! There's finally a Mysterio figure...but his stupid cape is plastic! And the Prowler? Plastic. Blacklash? *Plastic!* ARRGGHH!! Plastic capes suck!

STUFF THAT GOT US THROUGH THIS ISSUE

The snazzy Toy Biz Thanos figure (No cape!), Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill* and Rustëd Root's *When I Woke* albums, finally winning a softball game this season (We're now 1-6! Wa-hoo!), Mark Waid's first Cap issue (#444), and blue M & Ms. A *lot* of blue M & Ms.

CHECK LIST

InQuest #7

You can't hold it back... it's time for InQuest's first **horrific Halloween issue!** The [illegible] interview the Devil himself! Then [illegible] *Magic* cards you'll never see—they [illegible] unbelievable creations! Plus, [illegible] strategies to facing down and [illegible] sealed deck tournaments! We [illegible] look into what it'd be like if [illegible] Shivan Dragon and Giant Spider [illegible] issue's cauldron is mixed with [illegible] a way to **win a trip to a BattleTech virtual reality center!**—and gobs of [illegible] **Wolverine *OverPower* card** from Fleet and a **Crew card** from Heartbreaker! And the [illegible] over. This issue's 128 pages, making InQuest bigger than ever! It's all still... $3.99

CONTEST WINNERS

Congratulations to the Grand Prize winners of *Wizard* contests [illegible]

BIRTHQUAKE, ISSUES #45 & #46
Michael Tomaras of Astoria, N.Y. and Ronald Leyba of Chicago, Ill. were our Part 1 winners, while Rodney Lo of Seattle, Wash. and Troy Hunter of Louisville, Ky. conquered Part 2! They'll each spend a day hob-nobbing with an Acclaim artist, learning all sorts of tricks-of-the-trade and secret insider stuff. Good goin', guys!

BATMAN FOREVER, #47
Grand Prize winner Danny Olsson of Taylor, Mich. comes away with an SNES game system and loads of Batman games, cards and comics. Go, Danny!

WILDC.A.T.S, #47
The lucky Grand Prize winners of a full set of Playmates' WildC.A.T.s action figure line and a special edition WildC.A.T.s comic are Tyler Irwin of Duluth, Ga. and Keegan Buckingham of Brighton, Iowa!

MISSING LINK
Congrats to Lew Ragsdale, from Modesto, Calif., who figured out that issue #45's Missing Link books—Avengers #181 (Double Feature edition), Legion of Super-Heroes (vol. 4) #49 and Team Youngblood #6—all featured a giant woman! He wins a *Lady Death* (original series) #1!

next month

TOP TEN

Top ten worst things about "Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman":

10) Korean neighbors ate Krypto.
9) No one's beaten Jimmy Olsen to death.
8) Show just doesn't seem the same since Dean Cain's horseback riding accident.
7) Since when is Perry White a jug-blowin', moonshine-drinkin', "Hee Haw"-and-Elvis-lovin' hillbilly?
6) Not as much fun to make fun of as "seaQuest." (That's one dolphin we wanna see end up as a can of tuna.)
5) Clark's ties are louder than a Metallica concert.
4) No Vic Tayback screaming, "You dingy broads!"
3) No one ever attacks Lois in the shower.
2) "Comet the Superhorse Goes into Heat" episode pre-empted by "Joey Lawrence's Recipe for Lovin'" (And we wanted to see Comet bag that Olsen kid!).
1) It just sucks.

C.B.I.Q. ANSWERS

1. A	6. B	11. A	16. A
2. D	7. B	12. C	17. B
3. B	8. A	13. C	18. B
4. A	9. C	14. B	19. A
5. C	10. C	15. B	20. D

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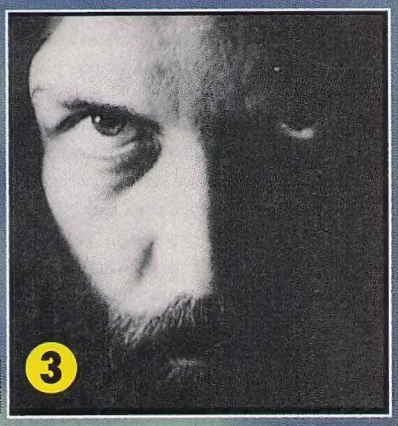

Mitch Jenkins

1. "X"-Men
Join *Wizard*, Scully and Mulder as we go behind-the-scenes of the comic that's more popular than the Beatles (back when they said they were more popular than Jesus). Then watch out as we try and figure out just why the *X-Files* TV show is so gosh-darn popular.

2. We got Keown!
More elusive than Bigfoot, harder to track down than "the guys who framed OJ," *Wizard* does the impossible and gets ahold of Pitt creator Dale Keown. Our first-ever in-depth interview with the fan-fave artist goes no-holds-barred and gets the full skinny...on everything.

3. A brew with Moore!
Get your ID's handy as we take you inside a pub in England to go one-on-one with *Watchmen* co-creator and current *WildC.A.T.s* scribe Alan Moore. Considered by many to be one of the more influential, talented and controversial creators in the industry, *Wizard* gets the full scoop on Moore's rise to fame, the success of *Watchmen*, his return to mainstream comics and what really happened between him and DC.

4. Freaks!
More frightening than the weirdness of *The X-Files*! Spookier than Alan Moore in a dark pub! It's the fourth annual *Wizard* costume contest, and it's not for the squeamish! Are *you* a winner?

Wizard #52
On sale in October

WIZARD profile

Here's looking at...

TOM LYLE

Tom Lyle wanted to make comic books a career from the beginning. His parents had other ideas. "My parents weren't thrilled," chuckles the 42-year-old artist and writer, his tongue never far from his cheek. "They were concerned that it was a dead-end field and that the comics were rotting my brain. They actually made me sell my collection in the 10th grade. I think my parents were a big part of pushing me into being such an obsessive sucker about it all."

Lyle, who with writer John Ostrander is currently attempting to bring The Punisher back from the dead for Marvel, was born and raised in Jacksonville, Fla., where, in junior high school, he became a self-described "Marvel geek."

"Before that I was only an occasional reader of comics. Things like Batman and Superman, which I got secondhand from my two older brothers."

In an attempt to make peace with his parents, Lyle went off to college and majored in advertising design. "I thought I would continue to dabble in comics while I was learning this junk. After college I spent 10 years doing advertising and hating it most of the time. In the meantime I was sending out portfolios every year or so, getting crushed by the rejection and crawling back into my hole," he laughs.

He persisted and, in 1984, broke in with an outer space spoof called *Women's Utter Space Patrol*, which, he recalls, "was supposed to be funny, but I was so uptight the whole time I was doing it that there was absolutely nothing funny about it." He started having more fun when Wonder Comics came around with work on its illustrious titles *Power Factor* and *GI Rambot*. Eclipse followed with work on *Sky Wolf*, *Airboy* and an original creation, with Chuck Dixon, called *Stryke*.

Lyle joined the big time when he became a workaholic for DC Comics, doing issues #1-#25 of the second (yellow and purple) incarnation of *Starman*, three Robin mini-series and the ill-fated Impact Comics title *The Comet* before rounding the corner to Marvel, where he started off with *Amazing Spider-Man Annual* #27, a Venom mini-series and *Spider-Man* #'s 44-61.

"The Punisher has basically lost a lot of his sheen," reflects Lyle of his latest effort on the violent-minded character, which begins shortly with a new *Punisher* #1. "He's always basically been a one-trick pony, and you can only ride it so long before it gets old. John and I are basically modifying his modus operandi of 'everything evil must go.' We've given him a more rounded personality."

Lyle, who will be flexing his writing chops with a Spider-Man/Punisher team-up that will appear in *Spider-Man Team-Up* #2 and *Cutting Edge* #2, claims that, despite the ongoing levity he injects into his personal conversations, his philosophy is not totally footloose. "I take comic books as seriously as I can, right up to the point where I remember, 'Hey! There's a life outside of comics and I'll survive no matter what.' But I'm committed to comics and I try really hard."

by Marc Shapiro

First comic read...
Amazing Spider-Man #33.

Favorite comic of all time...
Amazing Spider-Man #33. It stands out in my mind because it was a beacon of great storytelling.

Favorite work of your own...
I thought I hit a pretty good plateau with my penciling on *Spider-Man* #58 [1995].

Comics you currently read...
Stray Bullets and, occasionally, *Wolverine*.

The one person you'd like to meet...
Eric Clapton

Superpower you would most want...
I always thought it would be really cool to fly.

Favorite munchie at 2 a.m....
There's no favorite munchie at 2 a.m. because I'm never up at 2 a.m. My brain shuts down at 1 a.m. no matter what.

Favorite toy as a kid and as an adult...
As a kid it was my Rifleman rifle. As an adult it's my guitar.

Things you collect...
Records, comics and radios.

Person who would play you in a movie...
Kevin Costner

Favorite cartoon...
Tom and Jerry

Person you would most like to work with...
I'd like to just sit and watch Barry Windsor-Smith draw just once.

Favorite musical performer...
Eric Clapton

Favorite TV show...
Mad about You

Last good movie you saw...
Apollo 13

Last good book you read...
Summer of Fear by T. Jefferson Parker

If you had the power of the Beyonder...
I'd like to cure all world evil. Sure, I'll say something that pretentious and stupid.

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C5 R4 D5
"We're going to have to fight our way out."
Joel Alonday – WetWorks #1
SKILLS: Tech 2
POWERS: Subterfuge
TEAM: WetWorks
POINTS: 4

FAIRCHILD
C6 R3 D6
"I'm on my way!"
Caitlin Fairchild – Gen13 #2
SKILLS: (Psi 4) Tech 3 Thrown Objects 5
POWERS: Leadership
TEAM: Gen13
POINTS: 5

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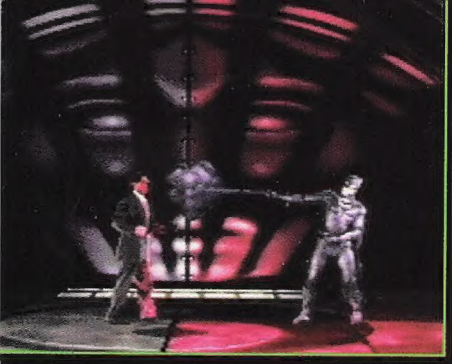

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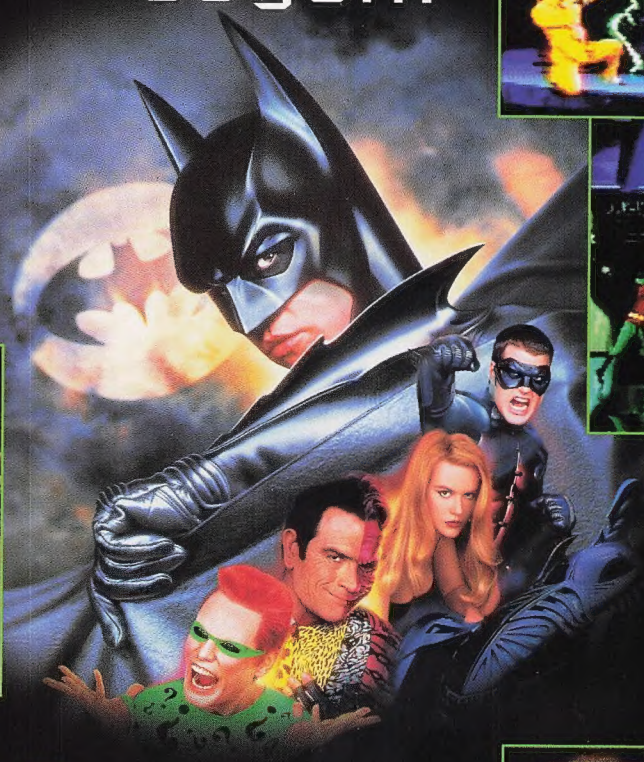

team up as Batman and Robin

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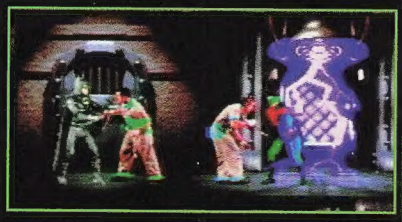

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